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Mephistopheles and the Androgyne
From Primitives to Zen
The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion

Mircea Eliade

Translated by Willard R. Trask

Zalmoxis The Vanishing God

Comparative Studies in the Religions and Folklore of Dacia and Eastern Europe

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Preface

In the following pages it is our purpose to present the essentials of the religion of the Geto-Dacians and the most important mythological traditions and folkloric creations of the Romanians. This does not imply, necessarily and in every point, continuity between the religious universe of the Geto-Dacians and the one that it is possible to decipher in Romanian folk tradition. If "continuity" is the desideratum, it must be sought on a deeper plane than the one defined by the history of the Geto-Dacians, the Daco-Romans, and their descendants the Romanians. For the cult of Zalmoxis, for example, as well as the myths, symbols, and rituals that underlie and determine Romanian religious folklore, have their distant roots in a world of spiritual values that precedes the appearance of the great Near Eastern and Mediterranean civilizations. This does not mean, however, that all the religious concepts of the Geto-Dacians are at least "contemporaneous" with those that can be deciphered in Romanian folk traditions. It is possible that one or another agrarian custom of our day is more archaic than, for example, the cult of Zalmoxis. It is well known that certain mythico-ritual scenarios still current among the peasants of central and southeastern Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century preserved mythological fragments and rituals that had disappeared in ancient Greece even before Homer.

This book does not pretend to be a religious history of Dacia. Indeed, in view of the paucity of documents it is doubtful if such a history can ever be written. In any case, archeological excavations have not yet come to the end of their surprises. And despite much effort, Romanian folk traditions are still inadequately known. So long as we do not have a *corpus* comparable to the one provided by Oskar Loorits in his *Grundzüge der estnischen Volksglaube,* any attempt at a synthesis will be premature.

For the time being it is only with the help of independent,

though complementary, monographs that we can advance the knowledge of the religious life of that area of Europe. In this volume we have assembled a series of studies dealing with the religious origins of the ethnic name of the Dacians, the cult of Zalmoxis, the folk cosmogonic myth (that is, the only one documented in Romanian folklore), the mythico-ritual meanings to be found in legends concerning the founding of a state (Moldavia), and the building of a monastery (Argeş), certain folk beliefs concerning magic and ecstasy, the mandragora and the gathering of medicinal herbs, and, lastly, the mythologies from which the masterpieces of Romanian epic poetry draw their vitality.

We need not say that our approach is that of the historian of religions: we have no intention of preempting the place of the folklorist, the archeologist, or the specialist in the ancient history of Eastern Europe. We have tried to decipher the underlying meanings of the documents—meanings that are often camouflaged, debased, or forgotten. And since the meaning of a belief or a religious behavior pattern does not become manifest except in the light of comparisons, we have not hesitated to consider our documents against the background of the general history of religions. For example, it is only within the value universe characteristic of hunters and warriors, and especially in the light of military initiation rites, that the ethnic name of the Dacians discloses its primitive religious meaning. So, too, the cult of Zalmoxis becomes comprehensible only after the initiatory meaning of the god's occultation and epiphany has been elucidated. The Romanian cosmogonic myth discloses its specific characteristics when we decipher not only the prehistory of Balkan and Central Asian "dualism" but also the hidden meaning of "God's weariness" after creating the Earth, a surprising expression of a *deus otiosus* reinvented by folk Christianity in a desperate attempt to divorce God from the imperfections of the world and the appearance of evil.

Many more instances could be given—for example: from the point of view of the historian of religions, the myth of the founding of the Principality of Moldavia has its distant roots in the archaic concept of the "ritual hunt"; the legend of the Monastery of Argeş discloses its symbolism not only when it is connected with construction rites but especially when we discover the primordial meaning

of a primitive type of human sacrifice; the most popular Romanian ballad, the "Mioritza," illustrates, together with a scarcely Christianized mythology of death, the persistence of an archaic theme peculiar to herder and hunter cultures, namely, the oracular function of the animal; the cult of the mandragora continues, in "folklorized" and debased form, the venerable belief in the herb of Life and Death.

But it would be superfluous to enumerate all the themes discussed in the several chapters of this book. What it is important to emphasize is the interest of such investigations for the general history of religions. These pages were written not so much to add our contribution to the researches of historians, folklorists, or specialists in Romanian studies, as to illustrate the possibilities open to a hermeneutics of the archaic and folk religious universes, in other words, of religious creations that have no written expression and, in general, no valid chronological criteria. We prepared this book while working on certain problems concerning the religions of the "primitive" peoples. And more than once the difficulties we encountered were of the same order. To begin with, the documents presented by the earliest explorers, missionaries, and ethnologists were collected with the same ideological presuppositions as those that characterized the earliest collections of folklore documents. Then, too, both "primitive" societies and "folklore" traditions were equally subjects of study that did not belong to the universe of exemplary values incarnated in Western culture—that is, in a culture defined by creations recorded in a linear historical time.

Fortunately, the progress recently achieved in our knowledge of "primitive" cultures offers more than one hope. These universes of archaic spiritual values will enrich the Western world in other ways than by adding to its vocabulary (*mana, tabu, totem,* etc.) or to the history of social structures. We have elsewhere dwelt on the possibilities opened up by this confrontation with the creations of archaic civilizations. The historian of religions aspires to enlarge the scope of the confrontation by questioning the folk cultures and folk religions of Europe, Asia, and the two Americas, while waiting for the development of a hermeneutics that will one day enable him to comprehend the religious values of prehistoric societies less imperfectly. Indeed, these researches and these hopes are integral

to one of the most vigorous and most innovative projects of the second half of the twentieth century: the cultural trend that pursues the study and knowledge of all the exotic, archaic, and "folk" worlds. Nothing is more fascinating or more stimulating for Western consciousness than the effort to understand the creations of so many "prehistories" and "protohistories" (and even of the "provincial histories" that gravitated around the margins of empires and survived their fall), creations accumulated and preserved for millennia in exotic, primitive, and "folk" cultures.

The essays included in this volume were written at different dates and, with the exception of chapters 2 and 8, appeared in the following journals: *Numen* (chap. 1), *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* (chap. 3), *Revue des Études Roumaines* (chaps. 4, 5), *Acta Historica* (chap. 6), *Zalmoxis, Revue des Études Religieuses* (chap. 8).

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1
The Dacians and Wolves

RELIGIOUS MEANINGS OF ETHNIC NAMES

According to Strabo (304: 7. 3. 12), the original name of the Dacians was *daoi* (*οὓς οἶμαι Δάους χαλεῖσθαι τὸ παλαιόν*). A tradition preserved by Hesychius informs us that *daos* was the Phrygian word for "wolf." P. Kretschmer had explained *daos* by the root **dhāu,* "to press, to squeeze, to strangle."[1] Among the words derived from this root we may note the Lydian Kandaules, the name of the Thracian war god, Kandaon, the Illyrian *dhaunos* (wolf), the god Daunus, and so on.[2] The city of Daous-dava, in Lower Moesia, between the Danube and Mount Haemus,[3] literally meant "village of wolves."[4]

Formerly, then, the Dacians called themselves "wolves" or "those

1. P. Kretschmer, *Einleitung in die Geschichte der griechischen Sprache* (Göttingen, 1896), pp. 388, 221, 214.

2. J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Berne, 1951–), p. 235; G. Kazarow, "Zur Geographie des alten Thrakiens" (*Klio* 12, N. F. 4 [1929]: 84–85), p. 84; cf. also G. Mateescu in *Ephemeris Dacoromana* (Bucharest, 1923), 1: 208. On Daunus see F. Altheim, *A History of Roman Religion* (London, 1938), pp. 206 ff. On Kandaon cf. O. Masson, *Kratylos* 2 (1957): 64.

3. Ptolemy 3. 10. 6; Kazarow, *Klio,* p. 84.

4. For *dava* "establishment" see W. Tomaschek, *Die alten Thrakern* (*Sitzungsberichte Akad. Wien,* 130, 1893), 2: 2: 70. Tomaschek connected *Daci, dai* with *dava* (ibid., I: 101). In other words, he took the ethnic name of the Dacians to mean "inhabitants of the *davae.*" In his final synthesis of Romanian history, N. Iorga accepted Tomaschek's explanation; cf. *Histoire des Roumains* (Bucharest, 1937), 1: i: 149. On the *dava* see E. Lozovan, "Le 'village' dans la toponymie et l'histoire roumaines" (*Zeitschrift f. romanische Philologie,* 1957, pp. 124–44).

who are like wolves," who resemble wolves.[5] Still according to Strabo (7. 3. 12; 11. 508, 511, 512), certain nomadic Scythians to the east of the Caspian Sea were also called *daoi.* The Latin authors called them *Dahae,* and some Greek historians *daai.*[6] In all probability their ethnic name was derived from Iranian (Saka) *dahae,* "wolf."[7] But similar names were not unusual among the Indo-Europeans. South of the Caspian Sea lay Hyrcania, that is, in Eastern Iranian "Vehrkana," in Western Iranian "Varkana," literally the "country of wolves" (from the Iranian root *vehrka,* "wolf"). The nomadic tribes that inhabited it were called Hyrkanoi, "the wolves," by Greco-Latin authors.[8] In Phrygia there was the tribe of the Orka (Orkoi).[9]

We may further cite the Lycaones of Arcadia,[10] and Lycaonia or Lucaonia in Asia Minor, and especially the Arcadian Zeus Lykaios[11] and Apollo Lykagenes; the latter surname has been explained as "he of the she-wolf," "he born of the she-wolf," that is, born of Leto in the shape of a she-wolf.[12] According to Heraclides Ponticus (*Fragm. Hist. Gr.* 218), the name of the Samnite tribe of the Lucani[13] came from Lykos, "wolf." Their neighbors, the Hirpini, took their name from *hirpus,* the Samnite word for "wolf."[14] At

5. Altheim observes that the name *daci* is formed, like *luperci,* with an adjectival suffix (*Roman Religion,* p. 212). Now see E. Lozovan, "Du nom ethnique des Daces" (*Revue Internationale d'Onomastique* 13 [1961]: 27–32).

6. Cf. Tomaschek, article "Daci," P.-W. 4: 1945–46.

7. Cf. H. Jacobsohn, *Arier und Ugrofinnen* (1922), pp. 154 ff.; P. Kretschmer, *"Zum Balkanskythischen"* (*Glotta* 24 [1935]: 1–56), p. 17.

8. Cf. Kiessling, P.-W. 9: 454–518.

9. Cf. R. Eisler, *Man into Wolf* (London, 1951), p. 137.

10. Cf. Eisler, *Man into Wolf,* p. 133.

11. On Zeus Lykaios see A. B. Cook, *Zeus* 1 (Cambridge, 1914): 70 ff.

12. See the bibliography in Eisler, *Man into Wolf,* p. 133.

13. Spelled Lykani on Metapontine coins ca. 300 B.C.; cf. Eisler, *Man into Wolf,* p. 134.

14. Servius, ad *Aen.* 11. 785: *lupi Sabinorum lingua "hirpi" vocantur.* Cf. Strabo 5. 250; on the Hirpini see also Altheim, *Roman Religion,* pp. 66 ff.

the foot of Mount Soracte lived the Hirpi Sorani, the "wolves of Sora" (the Volscian city). According to the tradition transmitted by Servius, an oracle had advised the Hirpi Sorani to live "like wolves," that is, by rapine (*lupos imitarentur, i.e., rapto viverent*).[15] And in fact they were exempt from taxes and from military service (Pliny *Hist. Nat.* 7. 19), for their biennial rite—which consisted in walking barefoot over burning coals—was believed to ensure the fertility of the country. Both this shamanic rite and their living "like wolves" reflect religious concepts of considerable antiquity. There is no need to cite other examples.[16] We will note only that tribes with wolf names are documented in places as distant as Spain (Loukentioi and Lucenses in Celtiberian Calaecia), Ireland, and England. Nor, indeed, is the phenomenon confined to the Indo-Europeans.

The fact that a people takes its ethnic name from the name of an animal always has a religious meaning. More precisely, the fact cannot be understood except as the expression of an archaic religious concept. In the case with which we are concerned, several hypotheses can be considered. First, we may suppose that the people derives its name from a god or mythical ancestor in the shape of a wolf or who manifested himself lycomorphically. The myth of a supernatural wolf coupling with a princess, who gives birth either to a people or a dynasty, occurs in various forms in Central Asia. But we have no testimony to its existence among the Dacians.

A second hypothesis comes to mind: the Dacians may have taken their name from a band of fugitives—either immigrants from other regions, or young men at odds with the law, haunting the outskirts of villages like wolves or bandits and living by rapine. The phenomenon is amply documented from earliest antiquity, and it survived in the Middle Ages. It is necessary to distinguish among:

15. On the *hirpi Sorani* now see Altheim, *Roman Religion,* pp. 262 ff.

16. A considerable number of examples will be found in Eisler, *Man into Wolf,* pp. 132–40, and Richard von Kienle, "Tier-Völkernamen bei indogermanischen Stämme" (*Wörter und Sachen* 14 [1932], 25–67), especially pp. 32–39. On the Argians, who called themselves "wolves," cf. Altheim, *Roman Religion,* p. 211. See also P. Kretschmer, "Der Name der Lykier und andere kleinasiatischen Völkernamen" (*Kleinasiatische Forschungen* 1 [1927]: 1–17).

(1) adolescents who, during their initiatory probation, had to hide far from their villages and live by rapine; (2) immigrants seeking a new territory to settle in; (3) outlaws or fugitives seeking a place of refuge. But all these young men behaved "like wolves," were called "wolves," or enjoyed the protection of a wolf-god.

During his probation the Lacedaemonian *kouros* led the life of a wolf for an entire year: hidden in the mountains, he lived on what he could steal, taking care that no one saw him.[17] Among a number of Indo-European peoples, emigrants, exiles, and fugitives were called "wolves." The Hittite laws already said of a proscribed man that he had "become a wolf."[18] And in the laws of Edward the Confessor (ca. A.D. 1000), the proscribed man had to wear a wolf-headed mask (*wolfhede*).[19] The wolf was the symbol of the fugitive, and many gods who protected exiles and outlaws had wolf names or attributes.[20] Examples are Zeus Lykoreius or Apollo Lykeios.[21] Romulus and Remus, sons of the wolf-god Mars and suckled by the she-wolf of the Capitol, had been "fugitives."[22] According to

17. Cf. H. Jeanmaire, *Couroï et Courètes* (Lille, 1939), pp. 540 ff., on concealment and lycanthropy. See also M. Eliade, *Naissances mystiques* (Paris, 1959), p. 229; English translation, by Willard R. Trask, *Birth and Rebirth: The Religious Meanings of Initiation in Human Cultures* (New York, 1958), p. 109.

18. Ungnad, cited by Eisler, *Man into Wolf*, p. 144.

19. "Lupinum enim caput a die utlagationis eius quod ab Anglis wulfeshened nominatur"; quoted by Eisler, *Man into Wolf*, p. 145. Cf. ibid., a passage from Henry de Bracton (1185–1267), *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliae* (1st ed., 1569), 2: 35: "a tempore quo utlagatus est, caput gerit lupinum ita ut ab omnibus interfici possit." In Anglo-Saxon the gibbet was called "the wolf's-head tree"; cf. L. Weiser-Aal, "Zur Geschichte der altgermanischen Todesstrafe und Friedlosigkeit" in *Archiv f. Religionswiss*, 30 [1933]: 222.

20. Cf. F. Altheim, *Griechische Götter im alten Rom* (Giessen, 1930), pp. 148 ff.; Altheim, *Roman Religion*, p. 261, referring to O. Jahn, *Ber. Sächs. Akad.* (1847), pp. 423 ff.; O. Gruppe, *Griech. Mythologie*, pp. 918 ff., 1296.

21. Altheim, *Roman Religion*, pp. 260 ff.

22. Altheim, ibid., pp. 261 ff. See also Gerhard Binder, *Die Aussetzung des Königskindes Kyros und Romulus* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1964). On the myth of the she-wolf with twins, and its roots in the archaic beliefs of the pastoral peoples of the Asian steppe, cf. A. Alföldi, "Theriomorphe Welt-

the legend, Romulus established a place of refuge for exiles and outlaws on the Capitol. Servius (ad *Aen.* 2. 761) informs us that this *asylum* was under the protection of the god Lucoris. And Lucoris was identified with Lykoreus of Delphi, himself a wolf-god.[23] Finally, a third hypothesis that may explain the name of the Dacians centers on the ability to change into a wolf by the power of certain rituals. Such a transformation may be connected with lycanthropy properly speaking—an extremely widespread phenomenon, but more especially documented in the Balkano-Carpathian region—or with a ritual imitation of the behavior and outward appearance of the wolf. Ritual imitation of the wolf is a specific characteristic of military initiations and hence of the *Männerbünde*, the secret brotherhoods of warriors. There are reasons to think that such rites and beliefs, bound up with a martial ideology, are what made it possible to assimilate fugitives, exiles, and proscribed men to wolves. To subsist, all these outlaws behaved like bands of young warriors, that is, like real "wolves."

MILITARY INITIATIONS: RITUAL TRANSFORMATION INTO A PREDATORY ANIMAL

The studies made by Lily Weiser, Otto Höfler, Stig Wikander, G. Widengren, H. Jeanmaire, and Georges Dumézil have mark-

betrachtung in den Hochasiatischen Kulturen" (*Archaeologische Anzeiger* [1931] col. 393–418), especially 393 ff.; Alföldi, *Der frührömische Reiteradel und seine Ehrenabzeichen* (Baden-Baden, 1952), pp. 88 ff.; Alföldi, "The Main Aspect of Political Propaganda on the Coinage of the Roman Republic" (in *Essays in Roman Coinage Presented to H. Mattingly* [Oxford, 1956], pp. 63–95), p. 68. On the folklore theme of the "Romulus and Remus" type cf. A. H. Krappe, "Acca Larentia" (*American Journal of Archaeology* 46 [1942]: 490–99); Krappe, "Animal Children" (*California Folklore Quarterly* 3 [1944]: 45–52). On Romulus and Remus and double kingship cf. A. B. Cook, *Zeus* 2: 440 ff.; 3: 2: 1134. On the twins Romulus and Remus and their counterparts in other Indo-European traditions cf. G. Dumézil, *La saga de Hadingus* (Paris, 1953), pp. 114–30, 151–54; Dumézil, *Aspects de la fonction guerrière chez les Indo-Européens* (Paris, 1956), pp. 20–21; Dumézil, *L'idéologie tripartie des Indo-Européens* (Paris, 1958), pp. 86–88, 106.

23. Cf. Altheim, *Roman Religion*, pp. 260 ff. On the name of the wolf-god cf. Kretschmer, *Der Name der Lykier*, pp. 15 ff.

edly advanced our knowledge of the Indo-European military brotherhoods, and especially of their religious ideology and initiatory rituals. In the Germanic world[24] these brotherhoods still existed at the end of the *Völkerwanderung*. Among the Iranians they are documented in the period of Zarathustra, but since a part of the vocabulary typical of the *Männerbünde* is also found in Vedic texts, there is no doubt that associations of young warriors already existed during the Indo-Iranian period.[25] G. Dumézil[26] has demonstrated the survival of certain military initiations among the Celts and the Romans, and H. Jeanmaire has discovered vestiges of initiatory rituals among the Lacedaemonians.[27] So it appears that the Indo-Europeans shared a common system of beliefs and rituals pertaining to young warriors. (We shall see further on whether there was an initiation of the entire body of young men or only of a particular class.)

Now the essential part of the military initiation consisted in ritually transforming the young warrior into some species of predatory wild animal. It was not solely a matter of courage, physical strength, or endurance, but "of a magico-religious experience that radically changed the young warrior's mode of being. He had to transmute his humanity by an access of aggressive and terrifying fury that made him like a raging carnivore."[28] Among the ancient Germans the predator-warriors were called *berserkir*, literally "warriors in the body-covering [*serkr*] of a bear." They were also known as *úlfhêdhnar*, "wolf-skin men."[29] The bronze

24. Cf. Otto Höfler, *Kultische Geheimbunde der Germanen* (Frankfurt a. M., 1934); Jan de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, 2 vols. (2d ed.; Berlin, 1956–57), especially 1: 453 ff., 492 ff.

25. Stig Wikander, *Der Arische Männerbund* (Lund, 1938); Wikander, *Vayu* 1 (Uppsala-Leipzig, 1941).

26. Cf. especially *Horace et les Curiaces* (Paris, 1942); Dumézil, *Mythes et dieux des Germains* (Paris, 1939). Now see Dumézil, *Heur et malheur du guerrier* (Paris, 1969).

27. H. Jeanmaire, *Couroï et Courètes*, pp. 540 ff.

28. Eliade, *Naissances mystiques*, p. 181; *Birth and Rebirth*, p. 84.

29. On the *berserkir* and the *úlfhêdhnar* cf. *Handwörterbuch d. deutschen Aberglaubens* 5: 1845 ff.; O. Höfler, *Kultische Geheimbünde*, pp. 170 ff.; Lily

plaque from Torslunda shows a warrior disguised as a wolf.[30] From all this, two facts emerge: (1) a young man became a redoubtable warrior by magically assimilating the behavior of a carnivore, especially a wolf; (2) he ritually donned the wolf-skin, either to share in the mode of being of a carnivore or to indicate that he had become a "wolf."

What is important for our investigation is the fact that the young warrior accomplished his transformation into a wolf by the ritual donning of a wolf-skin, an operation preceded or followed by a radical change in behavior. As long as he was wrapped in the animal's skin, he ceased to be a man, he was the carnivore itself: not only was he a ferocious and invincible warrior, possessed by the *furor heroicus*, he had cast off all humanity; in short, he no longer felt bound by the laws and customs of men. And in fact young warriors, not satisfied with claiming the right to commit rapine and terrorize the community during their ritual meetings, were able to behave like carnivores in eating, for example, human flesh. Beliefs in ritual or ecstatic lycanthropy are documented both among the members of North American and African[31] secret societies and among the Germans,[32] the Greeks,[33] the Iranians, and the Indians.[34] That there were actual instances of anthropophagic lycanthropy there is no reason whatever to doubt. The so-called

Weiser, *Altgermanische Jünglingsweihen u. Männerbünde* (Baden, 1927), p. 44; G. Dumézil, *Mythes et dieux des Germains*, pp. 81 ff.; J. de Vries, *Altgermanische Relig.*, 1: 454 ff.

30. J. de Vries, ibid. 1: pl. XI. Cf. also Höfler, *Kultische Geheimbünde*, pp. 56 ff.; Karl Hauch, "Herrschaftszeichen eines Wodanistischen Königtums" (*Jahrbuch für Frankische Landesforschung* 14 [1954]: 9–66), pp. 47 ff.

31. Cf. Eliade, *Naissances mystiques*, pp. 140 ff.; *Birth and Rebirth*, pp. 70 ff.

32. Cf. the references in Eliade, ibid., pp. 174 ff.; *Birth and Rebirth*, pp. 81 ff., 156.

33. Cook, *Zeus* 1: 81 ff.; J. Przyluski, "Les confréries des loups-garous dans les sociétés indo-européennes" (*Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 121 [1940]: 128–45); Eisler, *Man into Wolf*, pp. 141 ff.

34. Cf. E. Arbman, *Rudra* (Uppsala, 1922), pp. 266 ff.; G. Widengren, *Hochgottglaube im alten Iran* (Uppsala-Leipzig, 1938), pp. 334 ff.

leopard societies of Africa furnish the best example.[35] But such sporadic cases of "lycanthropy" cannot account for the dissemination and persistence of beliefs in "wolf-men." On the contrary, it is the existence of brotherhoods of young warriors, or of magicians, who, whether or not they wear wolf-skins, behave like carnivores, that explains the dissemination of beliefs in lycanthropy.

The Iranian texts[36] several times mention "two-pawed wolves," that is, members of the *Männerbünde.* The *Dēnkart*[37] even states that "two-pawed wolves" are "more deadly than wolves with four paws."[38] Other texts term them *keresa,* "brigands, prowlers," who move about at night.[39] The texts dwell on the fact that these "wolves" live on corpses;[40] however, without excluding the possibility of actual cannibalism,[41] this would seem to be more in the nature of a stereotype used by Zarathustran polemicists against the members of the *Männerbünde,* who, in practicing their ceremonies, terrorized the villages[42] and whose way of life was so different from that of the Iranian peasants and herders. In any case, mention is also made of their ecstatic orgies, that is, of the intoxi-

35. Cf. Eisler, *Man into Wolf,* pp. 148 ff., 160 ff.; see also Birger Lindskog, *African Leopard Man* (Uppsala, 1954).

36. Studied by Wikander, *Der Arische Männerbund,* pp. 64 ff. and Widengren, *Hochgottglaube,* pp. 328 ff., 344.

37. Widengren, ibid., p. 328.

38. *Ayās,* typical epithet of the Maruts, means "untamable, savage" (Wikander, *Der Arische Männerbund,* p. 43, referring to K. F. Geldner, *Vedische Studien* 1: 227 ff.). Now see Widengren, *Der Feudalismus im alten Iran* (Cologne, 1969), pp. 15 ff.

39. Widengren, *Hochgottglaube,* p. 330.

40. Widengren, ibid., pp. 331 ff.

41. Cf. the African examples cited by Widengren, ibid., pp. 322 ff. For India cf. Arbman, *Rudra,* pp. 266 ff. and M. Eliade, *Le Yoga. Immortalité et Liberté* (Paris, 1954), pp. 294 ff., 401–2; English translation, by Willard R. Trask, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* (New York, 1958), pp. 296 ff., 419.

42. On terrorizing villages cf. Widengren, *Hochgottglaube,* pp. 334 ff.; Eliade, *Naissances mystiques,* pp. 178 ff.; *Birth and Rebirth,* pp. 82 ff., 156–57, n. 10.

cating drink that helped them to change into wild beasts. Among the ancestors of the Achaemenides there was also a family named *saka haumavarka.* Bartholomae and Wikander[43] interpret the name: "those who change themselves into wolves (*varka*) in the ecstasy brought on by soma (*hauma*)." Now we know that down to the nineteenth century assemblies of young men included a banquet of food and drink stolen or obtained by force, especially alcoholic beverages.

THE CLUB AND THE STANDARD

The insignia peculiar to the Iranian *Männerbünde* (*mairiya*) were the "blood-stained club" and the standard (*drafša*).[44] As Wikander writes,[45] the blood-stained club was used in the distinctive ritual of the Iranian *Männerbünde* as the instrument for the ceremonial slaughter of an ox. The club became the symbol of the Iranian "carnivore-warriors."[46] It is the typical weapon of the archaic warrior. As is the case with implements of great antiquity, the club retains its value as a cult instrument when its military use has been supplanted by more modern weapons. In addition, the club continued to be the typical weapon of peasants and herders.[47] In this way it remained the weapon of the Romanian peasantry all through the Middle Ages and down to modern times, and is still the distinctive weapon in "young men's games," in which some memory of the initiatory brotherhoods always survives.

We may note another similarity between the Iranians and the

43. Cf. Wikander, *Der Arische Männerbund,* p. 64; J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *Hommage à Georges Dumézil* (Brussels, 1960), pp. 97–98. Cf. also J. Przyluski, "Les confréries de loups-garous dans les sociétés indo-européennes."

44. Cf. Wikander, *Der Arische Männerbund,* pp. 60 ff.; Wikander, *Vayu,* pp. 139 ff., 157 ff.; Widengren, "Stand und Aufgaben der iranischen Religionsgeschichte" (*Numen* 1 [1954]: 16–83; 2 [1955]: 47–134), 1: 66.

45. Wikander, *Der Arische Männerbund,* p. 99.

46. Wikander, ibid., p. 60; Wikander, *Vayu,* pp. 168 ff.

47. Cf. Widengren, "Harlekintracht und Mönchskutte, Clownhut und Derwischmütze" (*Orientalia Suecana* 2 [1953]: 40–111), pp. 93 ff. See also Maria Mariottini Spagnoli, "The Symbolic Meaning of the Club in the Iconography of the Kuṣāṇa Kings" (*East and West* 17 [1967]: 248–68).

Dacians. According to the tradition transmitted by the *Shahnamah*, one of the Persian standards bore the emblem of a wolf.[48] A mural painting found in Turkestan represents a standard in the shape of a wolf or a wolf-headed dragon.[49] During the Parthian period the elite army corps in northwestern Iran and Armenia—which, in fact, were the *Männerbünde*—were called "dragons" and had dragon standards. The young warriors liked to wear a helmet with a representation of a dragon.[50] Now we know that the Dacian standard represented a wolf with the body of a dragon.[51] The spread of the standard bearing a *draco* into the Roman armies of the Late Empire was in all probability due to a Parthian or Dacian influence.[52]

We should remember that the dragon also appeared on the standards of the Germans.[53] In addition, the wolf is represented on the scepter found in the ship burial at Sutton Hoo: in all probability it represented the mythical ancestor of the royal family.[54] Add that the onomastic stem Wulf-Wolf is extremely widespread

48. Cf. Widengren, *Hochgottglaube*, p. 343.

49. Cf. F. Altheim, *Attila und die Hunnen* (Baden-Baden, 1951), p. 37.

50. Cf. Widengren, *Numen* 1: 67. See also Widengren, "Some Remarks on Riding Costume and Articles of Dress among Iranian Peoples in Antiquity" (*Arctica, Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia* 11 [Uppsala, 1956]: 228–76).

51. Cf. Vasile Pârvan, *Getica, o protoistorie a Daciei* (Bucharest, 1926), pp. 519 ff.

52. Fieliger, in P.-W. art. *draco* (p. 521), thinks of the Parthians or the Dacians; A. J. Reinach, s. v. *signum*, in Daremberg-Saglio, p. 1321, believes it was the Sarmatians who introduced the *draco* into the Roman army. Pârvan (*Getica*, p. 522) thinks of the "iranized Dacians." Pârvan finds "the typological origins of the dragon ensign" in Mesopotamia (e.g., on a stela of Nebuchadnezzar I, ca. 1120, "the animal-headed and snake-bodied dragon").

53. Cf. Hauck, *Herrschaftszeichen eines Wodanistischen Königtums*, p. 33. Odin-Wodan himself was represented as an eagle, a dragon (cf. p. 38, n. 153), or a sea monster. These three types of animals, represented on the *signum*, symbolize the three cosmic regions—air, earth, water—and hence are preeminently the symbol of the Cosmocrator (cf. pp. 34 ff.).

54. Cf. ibid., p. 50.

among the Germans.[55] If we take into consideration all the other contexts in which the wolf plays an important part in the mythology and rituals of the Germans (*berserkir, Männerbünde*, werewolves, etc.), we are justified in concluding that, if the essential elements of this religious complex certainly seem to be Indo-European, there is a still closer connection among its Iranian, Thracian, and German manifestations. This is not the place to consider the problem further,[56] but it was important that we refer to it in order to avoid the impression that the parallels were confined to the Thraco-Phrygian and Iranian groups.

We may add that wolf-headed standards are documented among the Tu-kiu,[57] a branch of the Hiung-nu. The Tu-kiu claimed to be descended from a mythical She-wolf.[58] Each year the khan of the tribe offered a sacrifice to the She-wolf in the cave in which she was believed to have given birth. The members of the khan's bodyguard were called "wolves," and in battle they carried a standard surmounted by a gilded She-wolf.[59] As we have already said, the myth of descent from a male or female wolf is widespread among the Turco-Tatars. This fact is not unimportant for an understanding of the common basis of the various religious concepts discussed in this chapter.

55. Cf. the bibliography in ibid., p. 50, n. 223. The custom of calling chiefs by the name of an animal is documented among all the Altaian peoples. Cf. Haussing (in F. Altheim and Haussing, *Die Hunnen in Ost Europa*, 1958), pp. 25 ff.

56. Cf. J. Wiesner, *Fahren und Reiten in Alteuropa u. im alten Orient* (*Der alte Orient* 38 [1939]: 80 ff.); H. Güntert, *Der arische Weltkönig und Heiland* (Halle, 1923), pp. 130 ff., Wikander, *Vayu*, 93 ff. Cf. also Eliade, "Le 'dieu lieur' et le symbolisme des nœuds" (= *Images et Symboles* [1952] pp. 135 ff.).

57. See Freda Kretschmar, *Hundesstammvater und Kerberos* 1 (2 vols.; Stuttgart, 1938): 5, figs. 1–3.

58. Kretschmar, ibid. p. 6; W. Radloff, *Aus Sibirien* (2 vols.; Leipzig, 1893) 1:131.

59. Kretschmar, *Hundesstammvater* 1: 6; Radloff, *Aus Sibirien*, 1: 129; J. J. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China* (6 vols.; Leiden, 1892 ff.), 4: 270.

THE "DACIANS"—A MARTIAL BROTHERHOOD

To return to the Dacians, it seems probable that their ethnic name derives, in the last analysis, from the ritual epithet of a martial brotherhood. The stages of the process by which the ritual designation of a group became the name of a whole people escape us. (Nor are we any better informed in regard to the other European peoples with wolf-names.) But we can conceive of two alternatives: (1) because of the heroism and ferocity of the warrior youth of a tribe, their ritual designation—"wolves"—became the name of the tribe as a whole; or (2) the ritual designation of a group of victorious young immigrants was accepted by the conquered aborigines. In the latter case we can suppose that the conquerors became the military aristocracy and the ruling class. In the present state of our knowledge it is difficult to choose between these two possibilities. What is certain is that a considerable time must have elapsed before the ritual designation of a group became the name of a people. If we accept the first hypothesis, the surname of a small tribe was extended to neighboring tribes as more inclusive political organizations crystallized. In the second case, we must take into account the symbiosis between the victorious immigrants and the subjugated aborigines, a process which, whether more rapidly or more slowly, inevitably ended in the assimilation of the former.

Whatever the origin of their eponym may have been—ritual designation of the warrior youth, or surname of a group of victorious immigrants—the Dacians were certainly conscious of the connections between the wolf and war; the symbolism of their standard proves it. At first the name "Dacians" referred to one of the Thracian tribes in northwestern Dacia (Strabo 304: 7. 3. 12). In general, the name "Getae" occurs more commonly toward the Black Sea, from the Balkans to the Dniester (where the Tyregetai lived), whereas the name "Dacians" is more frequent in the northwest, the west, and the south (*Dakidava in northwestern Dacia, the Daursii in Dalmatia, the Daoi and Dioi of Rhodope, etc.[60]). The name "Dacians," used by Latin authors, is current especially in the period of Boerebista and Decebalus, when the unity and

60. Cf. Pârvan, *Getica*, p. 284.

political organization of the country were at their height and, according to Strabo (305: 7. 3. 13), the Dacian army could mobilize 200,000 men. The martial ritual designation triumphed at the moment of the greatest political and military expansion of the kingdom. It was the triumph of the young "wolves." Julius Caesar had well realized the danger represented by this new military power, and he was preparing to attack the "wolves" of the Danube when he was assassinated.

Pârvan[61] believed that the name "Dacian" (as well as the name "Getae") was Scythian; in other words, it would have passed from their Iranian conquerors to the Thracian peoples of the Carpathians. In our opinion, the Scythian origin of the name, though plausible, is not proved. As we said, the root **dhāu-*, "to strangle," is found in the Phrygian word for "wolf," *daos*.[62] The toponomy of Dacia has preserved a markedly Thracian character, even in the districts occupied by the Scythians.[63] Then, too, the persistence of Thraco-Phrygian (Cimmerian) names to the north of the Black Sea, where the Scythians settled in great numbers from the eighth century, strikingly illustrates the phenomenon of the survival of the aboriginal element under the domination of an Iranian military minority.[64] Most scholars are today inclined to reduce the Scythian contribution to Dacian culture to rather small proportions. Even in the Transylvanian region, where they maintained themselves until the fourth century B.C., the Scythians did not succeed in

61. Cf. ibid., p. 286.

62. Cf. above, n. 5, Altheim's observation on the formation of the name *dācus*. This, in our view, substantiates the hypothesis that there was a ritual transformation into a wolf, implying mystical union with a war god capable of manifesting himself lycomorphically (like Mars, for example).

63. Cf. Pârvan, *Getica*, pp. 285 ff., 753; Pârvan, *Dacia* (4th ed.; Bucharest, 1967), pp. 59 ff. (and pp. 163–70, recent bibliography, by Radu Vulpe).

64. Benveniste has observed that the information transmitted by Herodotus 4. 5–10 concerning the attribution of a Greek origin to the Scythians is onomastically Thraco-Phrygian; cf. "Traditions indo-iraniennes sur les classes sociales" (*Journal Asiatique* 230 [1938]: 527–50). Thracian names persist even in the Scythian kingdom of the Cimmerian Bosphorus down to the Greco-Roman period (cf. M. Rostovtzeff, *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia*, Oxford, 1922, p. 39).

transforming the indigenous civilization.[65] Since the Dacians remembered that they were formerly called *daoi*, it is not impossible that the designation is of Cimmerian origin. For the Cimmerians had inhabited a part of Dacia, especially the Carpathian region. The Cimmerians were a Thraco-Phrygian people with certain Iranian elements. If we prefer to explain the name "Dacian" by Iranian, we must think of the archaic Iranian elements documented among the Cimmerians rather than of the comparatively recent Scythian contribution.[66]

MYTHICO-RITUAL SCENARIOS OF THE WOLF

In any case, the archaism of the religious complex of the wolf is beyond doubt. The wolf is already present in the Neolithic civilization of Vinča: excavations there have brought to light not only statuettes of dogs and wolves but also some rather rudimentary figurines that have been interpreted as representing dancers wearing wolf-masks.[67] As for the latter objects—and supposing that this interpretation of them is correct—it is impossible to decide if they point to martial initiatory rites (of Iranian or Germanic type) or to seasonal ceremonies during which the young men wore wolf-masks. Ceremonies of this kind are still popular in the Romanian Balkans, especially during the twelve days from Christmas

65. D. Berciu, "À propos de la genèse de la civilisation Latène chez les Géto-Daces" (*Dacia*, N. S. 1 [1957]: 133–42), pp. 137 ff.: "The role of the Scythian factor seems to be less important than that of the other external factors" (ibid., p. 138). See also Radu Vulpe, "La civilisation dace et ses problèmes a la lumière des dernières fouilles de Poiana en Basse Moldavie" (*Dacia*, N. S. 1 [1957]: 143–64), especially pp. 157, 161.

66. Cf. Franz Hancar, "Hallstadt-Kaukasus. Ein Beitrag zur Klärung des Kimmerierproblem" (*Mitt. d. Oesterr. Gesell. f. Anthropologie, Ethnologie u. Prähistorie* 73–74 [1947]: 152 ff.); J. Harmatta, "Le problème cimmérien" (*Archaeologiai Ertesitö* [1948]: 49 ff.); R. Pittioni, *Die urgeschichtlichen Grundlagen der europäischen Kultur* (Vienna, 1949), pp. 255 ff.; R. Heine-Geldern, "Das Tocharerproblem und die Pontische Wanderung" (*Saeculum* 2 [1951]: 225–55), especially 245 ff. See also K. Jettmar in K. J. Narr et al., *Abriss der Vorgeschichte* (Munich, 1957), pp. 156 ff.

67. Pia Laviosa Zambotti, *I Balcani e l'Italia nella Preistoria* (Como, 1954), figs. 13–14, 16, and pp. 184 ff.

Eve to Epiphany.[68] Originally they were ceremonies connected with the periodic return of the dead and included all kinds of animal masks—horse, wolf, goat, bear, and so on.[69] This ritual scenario does not belong to the religious horizon that we are studying. So we need not discuss it here, any more than we need consider the various aspects of the mythology and ritual of the Wolf in the ancient Near East. In these few pages there can be no question of examining the extensive documentation brought together by F. Kretschmar. Our investigation is necessarily confined to the facts that may explain the transformation of a martial initiatory designation into an ethnic eponym.

We must distinguish not only among the various religious complexes that are crystallized around a mythical Wolf, but also among the various expressions of a single complex. In brief, the original source of all these creations lies in the religious universe of the primitive hunter: it is a universe dominated by the mystical solidarity between the hunter and the game.[70] Most often the solidarity is revealed or governed by a Lord (or Mother) of the Animals. It is a religious concept of this nature that makes it possible to understand the myths of the descent of a nomadic people from a carnivore (wolf, lion, leopard, etc.). The carnivore is the exemplary hunter. Another important aspect is the initiatory ritual and the myth that justifies it: a primordial animal slew men in order to restore them to life initiated, that is, changed into carnivores: the animal was finally killed, and this event is ritually reactualized during the initiation ceremonies; but by putting on the pelt of a wild beast the man undergoing initiation returns to life not as a

68. Kretschmar, *Hundesstammvater* 2: 251: G. Dumézil, *Le Problème des Centaures* (Paris, 1929), passim; Waldemar Liungmann, *Traditionswanderungen, Euphrat-Rhein* (Helsinki, 1937–38), pp. 738, 834, 1076, and passim.

69. The documentation will be found in the studies by Dumézil and Liungmann. Cf. also Evel Gasparini, *I Riti popolari slavi* (Venice, 1952), pp. 26 ff.

70. Karl Meuli, "Griechische Opferbräuche" (*Phyllobolia für Peter von der Mühll* [Basel, 1946]: 185–288), especially pp. 223 ff.; A. Friedrich, "Die Forschung über das frühzeitliche Jägertum" (*Paideuma* 2 [1941]): 1–2; H. Findeisen, *Das Tier als Gott, Dämon und Ahne* (Stuttgart, 1956). Cf. below, chap. 4.

human being but as the primordial animal, the supposed founder of the mystery. In other words, the mythical animal returns to life together with the initiate. Such a mythico-ritual complex is clearly documented in the African hunting cultures,[71] but it is also found elsewhere.[72]

A similar concept is discernible in the initiation rites of the Kwakiutl. The boys' initiation constitutes the repetition of a mythical event: the first possessor of the ritual was the Wolf; his brother the Mink, coming upon the Wolf's children in the forest one day, killed them and, having become the possessor of the rite, took the name "Wolf." The door of the initiatory cabin formerly had the shape of a wolf's maw. In this initiatory cabin the young *hamatsas*—the members of the Cannibal Society—completed their transformation into wolves: by eating corpses, they became possessed by a kind of insane fury, during which they bit the bystanders and swallowed pieces of raw flesh.[73] As Dumézil has already pointed out, the behavior of the young *hamatsa* resembles that of the Germanic *berserkr* possessed by *Wut*, by the *furor heroicus*.[74]

It is this phase of the magico-religious complex of the wolf that accounts not only for the reinterpretations and re-evaluations of the *Männerbünde* and military initiations but also for the beliefs in lycanthropy and werewolves.[75] The warrior is the preeminent example of the hunter; like the hunter, he has his model in the behavior of a carnivore. A man is a predator-warrior by right of birth when he is descended from a Wolf-Ancestor (as is the case with certain tribes or certain families of chiefs in Central Asia); or he becomes such through initiation, through ritual transformation into a carnivore (the Indo-Iranian *marya*, the *berserkir*, etc.). Among the Koryak and among some North American tribes (Kwakiutl, etc.) wolf-dances are performed before the war party sets out.[76] The members of the party are prepared for battle by being magically changed into wolves. In this case the operation is collective—whereas the Germanic *berserkr* obtained transformation into a wild beast individually.

In short, a man shares in the mode of being of a carnivore (1) by the mere fact that he is descended from a mythical animal, (2) by ritually putting on the pelt of a wild beast (repetition of a primordial event, resulting in assimilating the essence of the animal), and (3) by experiencing shamanic or martial initiation. Lycanthropy and the various beliefs in werewolves are similar phenomena, but they are independent of this magico-religious complex. According to Herodotus (4. 105), the Neuri turned into wolves every year.[77] This periodicity probably points to annual ceremonies, during which wolf-skins and wolf-masks were worn—whether on the occasion of the initiation of young men, or to enact the return of the dead. (In any case, these two ceremonies are usually performed together.)[78] But the majority of folk beliefs about werewolves concern individual transformation into a carnivore. Some cases can be explained by the survival of "spontaneous initiations"—a backward-looking phenomenon, a sort of spontaneous rediscovery of outworn or completely transformed ritual scenarios. The parallelism between the *berserkir* initiations and transformations into werewolves has often been pointed out.[79] We may

71. Cf. H. Straube, *Die Tierverkleidungen der afrikanischen Naturvölker* (Wiesbaden, 1955), pp. 198 ff.

72. Cf. Eliade, *Naissances mystiques*, pp. 58 ff.; *Birth and Rebirth*, pp. 23 ff.

73. Cf. the basic documentation and the bibliography in Werner Müller, *Weltbild und Kult der Kwakiutl-Indianer* (Wiesbaden, 1955), especially 65 ff. and Eliade, *Naissances mystiques*, pp. 139 ff.; *Birth and Rebirth*, pp. 68 ff.

74. Dumézil, *Horace et les Curiaces*, pp. 42 ff.

75. The role of the wolf in the shamanism of northern Asia is an earlier phenomenon. In general, shamanism precedes the various forms of martial magic.

76. Cf. Kretschmar, *Hundesstammvater* 2: 257; cf. fig. p. 121, representing the wolf-dance among the Kwakiutl.

77. On periodic transformation into a wolf in Arcadia cf. A. B. Cook, *Zeus* 1. 71 ff. See also M. Schuster, "Der Werwolf und die Hexen. Zwei Schauermärchen bei Petronius" (*Wiener Studien* 48 [1930]: 149–78); W. Kroll, "Etwas vom Werwolf" (ibid. 55 [1937]: 168–72).

78. Cf. for example Otto Höfler, *Kultische Geheimbünde der Germanen*, pp. 45 ff. and passim; see also Alexander Slawik, "Kultische Geheimbünde der Japaner und Germanen" (*Wiener Beiträge für Kulturgeschichte u. Linguistik*, Vienna, 1936, pp. 675–764), pp. 738 ff.

79. Höfler, *Kultische*, pp. 27 ff.; Dumézil, *Mythes et Dieux des Germains*, pp. 83 ff.

conclude that a great many legends and popular beliefs about werewolves[80] can be explained by a process of folklorization, that is, by the projection of concrete rituals, whether shamanic or of martial initiation, into the world of the imagination.

CARNIVORES, HUNTERS, WARRIORS

The unifying element of all these beliefs lies in the magico-religious experience of solidarity with the wolf, whatever the means used to bring it about may be: anthropophagy, *furor heroicus*, imitation by putting on the pelt, ceremonial intoxication, rapine, and so on. The discovery of such a mystical solidarity with the exemplary wild beast is always a personal experience; only such an experience produces the total change in behavior, the transformation of a human being into a carnivore. But the experience is made possible by the origin myth, in other words, by the reactualization of a primordial event that occurred at the beginning of Time. For both the lycomorphic mythical Ancestor and the mythical Founder of the initiatory mystery, or the First Shaman, or the First Warrior, performed certain decisive acts *in illo tempore*. These acts subsequently became the paradigmatic models to be imitated. Transformation into a wolf is accomplished to the degree to which he who seeks it leaves himself and the present, becomes contemporary with the mythical event.

Ritual recovery of the original Time is an archaic religious pattern of behavior that has been so well illuminated by recent studies that we need not dwell on it. Considered from this point of view, the various religious valorizations of the mystical solidarity between the wolf and the warrior can be explained as different expressions of one fundamental experience. The hunting of big game, like initiation, or war, or the invasion and occupation of a territory, are all of them activities for which there are mythical models: *in illo tempore* a supernatural carnivore performed them

80. The bibliography on werewolves is immense; the essentials will be found in W. Hertz, *Der Werwolf* (Stuttgart, 1862); W. Fischer, *Dämonische Wesen, Vampir u. Werwolf in Geschichte u. Sage* (Stuttgart, 1906); Montague Summers, *The Werewolf* (London, 1933); Kretschmar, *Hundesstammvater* 2: 184 ff.; Eisler, *Man into Wolf*, pp. 146–47 (bibliography).

for the first time. Hence he who would become a famous hunter, a redoubtable warrior, a conqueror, is able to do so to the extent to which he reactualizes the myth, that is, to which he imitates the carnivore's behavior and repeats the primordial event. Thus, though they belong to different historical moments and represent independent cultural expressions, we discern a structural analogy among the collective pursuit of game, war,[81] the invasion of a territory by a group of immigrants, and the behavior of fugitives and outlaws. All who perform one of these acts behave in the manner of wolves, because, from a certain point of view and for different reasons, they are engaged in "founding a world." In other words, by imitating the mythical model, they hope to begin a paradigmatic existence, they desire to be freed from the weakness, the impotence, or the misfortunes that are bound up with the human condition.

In southeastern Europe and the Mediterranean region such archaic religious ideologies were altered and finally driven underground by cultural influences from the East and the Aegean. By the time that the historical period opens, nothing is left of them in Greece, in Italy, and in the Balkan Peninsula except mythological fragments and some traces of initiatory rituals. The original name of the Dacians must be classed among these mutilated relics, together with more celebrated fragments, such as the legend of Romulus and Remus. To be sure, a part of this heritage survived in the form of popular customs and the various creations of the folk in those pre-eminently conservative regions, the Balkans and the Carpathians. We are thinking not only of the beliefs in werewolves but also of certain customs, and especially of the folklore of wolves. Saint Sava and Saint Theodore in Yugoslavia, Saint Peter in Romania, are regarded as patrons of wolves.[82] A whole study remains

81. Cf. Karl Meuli, "Ein altpersischer Kriegsbrauch" (in *Westöstliche Abhandlungen. Festschrift Rudolf Tschudi*, Wiesbaden, 1954, pp. 63–86), on the common structure of military and hunting techniques among the Iranians and the Turco-Mongols.

82. Cf. Laviosa Zambotti, *I Balcani*, p. 186, on the Balkan data. See also Octavian Buhociu, "Le Folklore roumain de printemps" (typewritten thesis, Université de Paris, 1957), pp. 127 ff. and passim.

to be written on the body of archaic customs and beliefs that survive in the Balkano-Carpathian region.

To conclude these observations, we will say a word about what could be termed the mythical dimension of the history of the Dacians. It is significant that the only people that succeeded in definitely conquering the Dacians was the Romans—a people whose genealogical myth crystallized around Romulus and Remus, the sons of the wolf-god Mars, suckled and brought up by the she-wolf of the Capitol. The result of this conquest and assimilation was the birth of the Romanian people. In the mythical view of history, we could say that the Romanian people was engendered *under the sign of the Wolf,* that is, was predestined to wars, invasions, and emigrations. The Wolf appeared for the third time in the mythical horizon of the history of the Daco-Romans and their descendants. For the Romanian principalities were founded as the result of the great invasions by Genghis Khan and his successors. Now the genealogical myth of the Genghis-Khanides proclaims that their ancestor was a gray Wolf that came down from Heaven and coupled with a doe. . . .

1959.

2
Zalmoxis

HERODOTUS 4. 94–96

In a celebrated passage Herodotus tells us what he had learned from the Greeks who lived beside the Hellespont and the Black Sea concerning the religious beliefs of the Getae and, more particularly, concerning their god Zalmoxis. The Getae, says Herodotus, are "the bravest and most law-abiding of all Thracians" (4. 93). They "claim to be immortal, [and] this is how they show it: they believe that they do not die, but that he who perishes goes to the god [*daimon*] Salmoxis or Gebeleïzis, as some of them call him" (4. 94; trans. A. D. Godley, in Loeb Classical Library, vol. 11). Herodotus next describes two rituals consecrated to Zalmoxis: the sacrifice of a messenger, performed every five years, and the shooting of arrows during thunderstorms. We shall examine these rituals later. For the moment, let us read what else Herodotus had learned from his informants.

"I have been told by the Greeks who dwell beside the Hellespont and Pontus that this Salmoxis was a man who was once a slave in Samos, his master being Pythagoras, son of Mnesarchus; presently, after being freed and gaining great wealth, he returned to his own country. Now the Thracians were a meanly-living and simple-witted folk, but this Salmoxis knew Ionian usages and a fuller way of life than the Thracians; for he had consorted with Greeks, and moreover with one of the greatest Greek teachers, Pythagoras; wherefore he made himself a hall, where he entertained and feasted the chief among his countrymen, and taught them that neither he nor his guests nor any of their descendants should ever die, but that they should go to a place where they would live for ever and have all good things. While he was doing as I have said and teaching this doctrine, he was all the while making him an underground chamber. When this was finished, he vanished from the sight of

the Thracians, and descended into the underground chamber, where he lived for three years, the Thracians wishing him back and mourning him for dead; then in the fourth year he appeared to the Thracians, and thus they came to believe what Salmoxis had told them. Such is the Greek story about him. For myself, I neither disbelieve nor fully believe the tale about Salmoxis and his underground chamber; but I think that he lived many years before Pythagoras; and whether there was a man called Salmoxis, or this be the name among the Getae for a god of their country, I have done with him" (4. 95–96; trans. A. D. Godley).

As was only natural, this text made a great impression in the ancient world, from Herodotus' contemporaries to the last Neo-Pythagoreans and Neo-Platonists. It has been minutely commented upon and interpreted by scholars, and continues to be so in our day. Some of these interpretations will occupy us further on.[1] For

1. The bibliography down to 1936, compiled by G. Kazarow, is given in his "Thrakische Religion," in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopaedie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 6 A: 1, zweite Reihe, 11 Halbband (Stuttgart, 1936), especially col. 548 ff. See also Carl Clemen, "Zalmoxis" (*Zalmoxis, Revue des études religieuses* 2 [Bucharest, 1939]: 53–62); Jean Coman, "Zalmoxis. Un grand problème gète" (ibid., pp. 79–110); I. I. Russu, "Religia Geto-Dacilor. Zei, credinte, practici religioase" (*Anuarul Institutului de Studii Clasice* 5 [Cluj, 1947]: 61–137), especially pp. 84–102 (pp. 66–74, bibliography, useful particularly for works published in Romanian); Russu, "Zalmoxis," *Real-Encyclopaedie,* zweite Reihe, 18 [1967]: col. 2302–5; Friedrich Pfister, "Zalmoxis" (*Studies Presented to D. M. Robinson,* ed. by George Mylonas and Doris Raymond [2 vols.; Washington University, Saint Louis, Missouri, 1953] 2: 1112–23). It would serve no purpose to repeat here the rich bibliography on the protohistory and history of Dacia; we will list only a few indispensable books: Vasile Pârvan, *Getica. O protoistorie a Daciei* (Bucharest, 1926); Pârvan, *Dacia. An Outline of the Early Civilization of the Carpatho-Danubian Countries* (Cambridge, 1928; see also the Romanian translation by Radu Vulpe [4th ed.; Bucharest, 1967] with important additions and critical bibliographies by the translator, pp. 159–216); *Istoria României,* 1 (3 vols.; Bucharest, 1961); D. Berciu and D. M. Pippidi, *Din istoria Dobrogei I: Geti şi Greci la Dunărea-de-jos din cele mai vechi timpuri până la cucerirea romană* (Bucharest, 1965); Hadrian Daicovici, *Dacii* (Bucharest, 1965); Vulpe, *Aşezări getice in Muntenia* (Bucharest, 1966). It should be borne in mind that Herodotus gives us information only about the Getae and the neighboring tribes (Terizoi, Crobyzi) of the Pontic region. It is not until later, during the period of the Roman Empire, that authors begin to be interested in the Dacians who inhabited the Carpathians.

the moment let us single out the most important elements: (*a*) Herodotus' informants especially emphasized the fact that Zalmoxis had been Pythagoras' slave and that, after being freed, he devoted himself to acquainting the Getae with Greek civilization and his master's teachings; (*b*) the most essential feature of Zalmoxis' "Pythagorean" doctrine was the idea of immortality, or more precisely of a blissful postexistence; (*c*) Zalmoxis set forth this doctrine at banquets that he offered to the leading citizens in an *andreon* built for the purpose; (*d*) during this time he had an underground chamber built, in which he hid for three years; thinking him dead, the Getae mourned him, but he reappeared in the fourth year, thus giving a startling proof that his teaching was true. Herodotus ends his account without committing himself as to the reality of the underground chamber and without deciding if Zalmoxis was a man[2] or a divine being, but stating that, in his opinion, he lived many years before Pythagoras.

Except for one detail that seems incomprehensible—that is, the statement that the Getae mourned Zalmoxis after his disappearance (for how should they have concluded that he was *dead* if they did not find his body?)—the account is consistent: the Hellespontine Greeks, or Herodotus himself, had integrated what they had learned about Zalmoxis, his doctrine, and his cult into a Pythagorean spiritual horizon. That the Hellespontine Greeks, or Herodotus himself, had done this for patriotic reasons (how could such a doctrine possibly have been discovered by barbarians?) is not important. What is important is the fact that the Greeks were struck by the similarity between Pythagoras and Zalmoxis. And this in itself is enough to tell us of what type the doctrine and religious practices of the cult of Zalmoxis were. For the *interpreta-*

2. The historical reality of a man who claimed to be Zalmoxis, who was a disciple of Pythagoras, and who tried to introduce "Pythagorean politics" into Dacia is maintained by Edward L. Minar, Jr., *Early Pythagorean Politics in Practice and Theory* (Baltimore, 1942), pp. 6 ff. The hypothesis is not convincing.

tio graeca permitted a considerable number of homologations with Greek gods or heroes. The fact that Pythagoras was named as the source of Zalmoxis' religious doctrine indicates that the cult of the Getic god involved belief in the immortality of the soul and certain rites of the initiatory type. Through the rationalism and the euhemerism of Herodotus, or of his informants, we divine that the cult had the character of a mystery religion. This may be the reason why Herodotus hesitates to give details (if—which is not certain—his sources had informed him); his discretion in regard to the Mysteries is well known. But Herodotus declares that he does not believe in the story of Zalmoxis as the slave of Pythagoras; on the contrary, he is convinced that the Getic *daimon* was by far the earlier of the two, and this detail is important.

THE "UNDERGROUND CHAMBER"

The *andreon* that Zalmoxis had built, and in which he received the principal citizens and discoursed on immortality, is reminiscent both of the chamber in which Pythagoras taught at Crotona[3] and the rooms in which the ritual banquets of the secret religious societies took place. Such scenes of ritual banquets are abundantly documented later on monuments found in Thrace and in the Danubian area.[4] As for the underground chamber—if it was not an interpolation by Herodotus, who remembered a legend of Pythagoras[5] that we shall now discuss—it is clear that its function was

3. Pierre Boyancé, *Le culte des muses chez les philosophes grecs* (Paris, 1937), p. 134, sees in the meals eaten together by Zalmoxis and his guests the earliest testimony to the cult meal of the Pythagoreans.

4. The documentation will be found in G. Kazarow's article, *Real-Encyclopaedie* 6 A: 548 ff.; see also M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, 1 (2d ed.; Munich, 1955): 172 ff.; G. Pintea, *Anuarul Institutului de Studii Clasice* 2 (Cluj, 1935): 229, n. i, lists the monuments found in Dobrudja; see also Vulpe, *Histoire ancienne de la Dobroudja* (Bucharest, 1938), p. 220 and fig. 61.

5. Walter Burkert (*Weisheit und Wissenschaft. Studien zu Pythagoras, Philolaus und Platon* [Nüremberg, 1962], pp. 139 ff.) suggests that the "underground chamber" may be due to an influence from Pythagorean tradition. For, as we shall see, Strabo (7. 297 f.) does not mention an "underground chamber" but a cave on Mount Kogaionon. However this may be, symbolically and ritually the underground hiding place is equivalent to the cave: both mean the "otherworld." See also W. Aly, *Volksmärchen, Sage und Novelle bei Herodot und seinen Zeitgenossen* (Göttingen, 1921), pp. 129 ff.

not understood. According to this legend, preserved in a satirical narrative by Hermippus that has come down to us only incompletely,[6] Pythagoras retires for seven years (the seven years' period is given by Tertullian) into an underground hiding place. Following his instructions, his mother writes a letter, which he learns by heart before sealing it. When he reappears, like a dead man returning from Hades, he goes before the assembly of the people and declares that he can read the tablet without breaking the seal. After this miracle the people of Crotona are convinced that he had been in the underworld and believe all that he tells them about the fate of their relatives and friends. For Pythagoras, however, survival of the soul is only a consequence of the doctrine of metempsychosis, and it is this doctrine that he makes every effort to inculcate.

Ever since Rohde first pointed it out, scholars have recognized that the source of this parody is Herodotus' account of Zalmoxis going into hiding.[7] But it is possible that Hermippus used other sources as well.[8] Furthermore, Iamblichus in his "Life of Pythagoras" repeats the same story but adds details that are not in

6. In abridged form by Diogenes Laertius 8. 41, and by Tertullian *De anima* 28, and the scholiast on *Electra* v. 62—texts reprinted by Isidore Lévy, *Recherches sur les sources de la légende de Pythagore* (Paris, 1926), pp. 37–38. See the discussion of this subject in Lévy, *La légende de Pythagore en Grèce et en Palestine* (Paris, 1927), pp. 129 ff.

7. Erwin Rohde, "Die Quellen des Iamblichus in seiner Biographie des Pythagoras" (*Rheinisches Museum* 26 [1871]: 554–76), p. 557; Armand Delatte, *La vie de Pythagore de Diogène Laërce* (Brussels, 1922), p. 245; Lévy, *La légende de Pythagore*, p. 133.

8. At least three elements are not found in Herodotus: the theme of the letter, the detail that Pythagoras reappears in the form of a skeleton, and especially the presence of his mother. It is possible that this last motif represents a rationalization of the chthonian Great Mother; cf. Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft*, p. 139. In Metapontum, where Pythagoras was believed to have died, his house was made a sanctuary of Demeter; cf. Boyancé, *Le culte des muses*, p. 234.

Herodotus.[9] Whatever is to be made of this, Herodotus' rationalistic account, as well as the parodies handed down by Hermippus and his sources, are either blind to, or deliberately distort, the religious significance of the facts that they report. Retiring into a hiding place or descending into an underground chamber is ritually and symbolically equivalent to a *katabasis*, a *descensus ad inferos* undertaken as a means of initiation. Such descents are documented in the more or less legendary biographies of Pythagoras.[10] According to Porphyry (*Vita Pyth.* 16–17), Pythagoras, on a visit to Crete, was initiated into the Mysteries of Zeus in the following manner: he was purified by the *mystae* of the Dactyl Morges by the application of a thunderstone, spent the night wrapped in a black fleece, and went down into the cave of Ida, where he remained for twenty-seven days. Diogenes Laertius (8. 3) adds that he went down into the cave in company with Epimenedes, the perfect type of the catharite.[11] Finally, in the *Abaris*, of which story only some fragments have come down to us, Pythagoras descends into Hades accompanied by a supernatural guide.[12]

9. J. S. Morrison, "Pythagoras of Samos" (*Classical Quarterly* 50 [1956]: 135–56), pp. 140–41.

10. The sources for Pythagoras' descents underground have been brought together and discussed by Paul Corssen, "Zum Abaris des Heraklides Ponticus" (*Rheinisches Museum* 67 [1912]: 20–47), pp. 42 ff.; cf. A. Dieterich, *Nekyia* (2d ed.; Leipzig-Berlin, 1913), pp. 130 ff.; Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, 1: 664. Now see Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft*, pp. 136 ff.

11. It is after this pattern that Philostratus *Vita Apolonii* 8. 19 elaborates the descent of Apollonius of Tyana into the Cave of Trophonius, where he remains for seven days. When he asks which is the most perfect philosophy the oracle replies with a doctrine resembling the one taught by Pythagoras.

12. Cf. Lévy, *La légende de Pythagore*, pp. 79 ff.; cf. also pp. 46 f., 84 f. It should be noted that recent studies of Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism can throw further light on our subject, if only indirectly. On the one hand we now have better editions of the texts and rigorous textual analyses; cf. for example Maria Timpanaro Cardini, *Pitagorici: Testimonianze e Frammenti* (3 vols.; Florence, 1958–64); Holger Thesleff, *An Introduction to the Pythagorean Writings of the Hellenistic Period* (Acta Academiaea Aboensis, Humaniora 24, 3; Abo, 1961). On the other hand scholars are increasingly inclined to attribute value to certain late-antique documents that have been neglected or underestimated until lately. One consequence of this new methodological approach directly concerns the historical figure of Pythagoras: the "mystic" Pythagoras is no longer separated from Pythagoras the "scientist." In addition to Morrison's article and Burkert's book, already cited, see C. J. De Vogel, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism* (Assen, 1966), and W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* 1 (3 vols.; Cambridge, 1965–69): 146–81.

Though these legends are late, they help us to grasp the original meaning of Zalmoxis' underground chamber. It represents an *initiatory ritual.* This does not necessarily imply that Zalmoxis was a chthonian divinity (see further on, p. 44). Descending into Hades means to undergo "initiatory death," the experience of which can establish a new mode of being. The "disappearance" (occultation) and "reappearance" (epiphany) of a divine or semidivine being (messianic king, prophet, magus, lawgiver) is a mythico-ritual scenario frequently found in the world of the Mediterranean and Asia Minor. Minos, son of Zeus, the exemplary model of the lawgiver in antiquity, retired every nine years to the mountain cave of Zeus and emerged from it with the tables of the law (Strabo 10. 4. 8; 16. 2. 38). It is above all Dionysus who is characterized by his periodic epiphanies and disappearances, by his "death" and his "renascence," and we can still discern his relation to the rhythm of vegetation and, in general, to the eternal cycle of life, death, and rebirth. But in the historical period this fundamental connection between the cosmic rhythms and the presence, preceded and followed by the absence, of supernatural Beings was no longer apparent.

RITUAL CAVES: OCCULTATION AND EPIPHANIES

A mythico-ritual scenario can be discerned in many traditions concerning the periodic epiphany of a god or the enthronement of a cosmocratic or messianic king or, finally, the appearance of a prophet. This scenario survived comparatively late in certain Iranian spheres and in Asia Minor. According to one legend, Mani announces that he will ascend to Heaven, where he will

remain for a year, then he retires into a cave.[13] Bîhâfarid, who lived in the eighth century, builds a temple and, convincing his wife that he is dying, has himself shut up in it. He reappears after a year, declaring that he has been in Heaven, where God had shown him Heaven and Hell and had entrusted him with a revelation.[14] G. Widengren has usefully studied this motif, relating it, among others, to the tradition transmitted by Al-Bîrûni: on the eve of his enthronement the Parthian king retires into a cave and his subjects approach and venerate him as a newborn babe, that is, as an infant of supernatural origin.[15] Armenian traditions tell of a cave in which Meher (i.e., Mihr, Mithra) shuts himself up and from which he emerges once a year. And in fact the new king is Mithra, reincarnated, born anew.[16]

This Iranian theme recurs in the Christian legends of the Nativity in the light-filled cave of Bethlehem. According to the anonymous author of the *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum,* the Three Magi every year climbed the Mount of Victories, where there was a cave with springs and trees, awaiting the appearance of the Star. It appeared at last in the form of a little child who told them to go to Judea. The *Chronicle of Zuqnîn,* the prototype of which—like that of the *Opus imperfectum*—must be earlier than the sixth century, embroiders on this legend: The twelve "Wise Kings" climb the mountain every month and enter the Cave of Treasures. One day they see a pillar of ineffable light surmounted by a Star whose brightness eclipses that of several suns. The Star

13. Mirxond, *Histoire des Sassanides* (Paris, 1843), p. 189; see Widengren's commentary in his *Muhammad, the Apostle of God, and His Ascension* (Uppsala, 1955), pp. 83 ff.; Widengren, *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung in parthischer Zeit* (Cologne and Opladen, 1960), p. 64.

14. Cf. the texts cited by Widengren, *Muhammad, the Apostle of God,* p. 82; *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung,* pp. 63–64.

15. Al-Bîrûni, *India* (trans. Sachau), 2: 10; Widengren, *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung,* p. 62.

16. Cf. Widengren, *Iranisch-semitische,* p. 65; Widengren, *Les religions de l'Iran* (French trans.; Paris: Payot, 1968), p. 269. See other examples in Sven S. Hartman, *Gayômart. Étude sur le syncrétisme dans l'ancien Iran* (Uppsala, 1953), p. 60, n. 2, p. 180 and n. 6.

enters the Cave of Treasures, and a voice invites the kings to follow it. When they enter the cave the kings are blinded by the light and kneel down. But the light concentrates itself and soon afterward appears in the form of a little, humble man who tells them that he has been sent by the Heavenly Father. He advises them to go to Galilee.[17]

Here we recognize, in strongly Iranized form, the great syncretistic myth of the Cosmocrator-Redeemer. As we have shown elsewhere,[18] certain elements are archaic and precede the cult of Mithra and Irano-Semitic syncretism. The important place taken by the theme of supernatural light must not make us overlook the fundamental symbolism of the scenario. Here, as in the examples cited above, the cave at the summit of the mountain signifies the most typical site of the divine epiphany, the place where, after a period of occultation, a redeeming god, a prophet, or a cosmocrator makes his appearance.

Now the cave represents the otherworld, but also the entire Universe. It is not the immediate, "natural" valorization of the cave as a dark—and hence subterranean—place that enables us to perceive its symbolism and its religious function, but the experience caused by entering a place whose sacredness makes it "total," that is, a place that *constitutes a world-in-itself.* The ritual cave sometimes imitates the night sky.[19] In other words, it is an *imago mundi,* a Universe in miniature.[20] Living in a cave does not necessarily imply going down among the shades; it can as well imply living in a different world—a world that is vaster and more complex because it incorporates various modes of existence (gods, demons, souls of the dead, etc.) and hence is full of "riches" and countless virtualities (cf. the desacralized myths of caves contain-

17. See the sources and bibliography in Mircea Eliade, *Méphistophélès et l'Androgyne* (Paris, 1962), pp. 61–63.

18. Cf. *Méphistophélès et l'Androgyne,* pp. 63–64.

19. See A. B. Cook, *Zeus* 2: 2 (3 vols.; Cambridge, 1914–40): 1150; 3: 2 (1940): 1187.

20. Cf. F. K. Dörner and T. Goell, *Arsameia am Nymphaios* (Berlin, 1963), pp. 129–45.

ing treasure, etc.). It is only since the "naturalistic" interpretation imposed by nineteenth-century scholars, who reduced religious symbolisms to their concrete, physical expressions, that the cosmic meaning of caves and underground cult dwellings have been reduced to a single value, that is, the abode of the dead and the source of telluric fertility.[21]

ZALMOXIS AND "IMMORTALIZATION"

If we now try to understand the tradition handed down by Herodotus *in itself,* without inquiring into its origin or its authenticity, the personage represented by Zalmoxis can be described as follows: (*a*) he is a *daimon* or a *theos* who reveals an eschatological doctrine and "founds" an initiatory cult on which the ontological order of existence after death depends; (*b*) in other words, Zalmoxis is not a supernatural Being of the cosmic or institutional type, believed to have been there from the beginning of the tradition—like the other Thracian gods Herodotus mentions, "Ares," "Dionysus," "Artemis," or "Hera"; Zalmoxis makes his appearance in a religious history that precedes him, he inaugurates a new epoch in eschatological terms; (*c*) the "revelation" that he brings to the Getae is communicated through a well-known mythico-ritual scenario of "death" (occultation) and "return to earth" (epiphany), a scenario used by various figures engaged in founding a new era or establishing an eschatological cult; (*d*) the central idea of Zalmoxis' message concerns the survival or the immortality of the soul; (*e*) but since the return of Zalmoxis in the flesh does not constitute a "proof" of the "immortality" of the soul, this episode would seem to reflect a ritual unknown to us.

The belief in the immortality of the soul never ceased to interest the Greeks of the fifth century. Herodotus found no more spectacular formula to introduce the Getae than to present them as those who "pretend to be immortal" (*getas tous athanatizontas;* 4. 93), for "they believe that they do not die, but that he who perishes goes to . . . Zalmoxis" (4. 94). In the *Charmides,* a dialogue probably

21. F. B. J. Kuiper, though he emphasizes its "infernal" aspect, has clearly seen the cosmic structure of the Indo-Iranian otherworld; cf. "Remarks on 'The Avestan Hymn to Mithra'" (*Indo-Iranian Journal* 5 [1961]: 36–60), pp. 58–59.

written some thirty years after Herodotus, Socrates speaks of a Thracian physician he had met, "one of the physicians of the Thracian king Zalmoxis who are said to be able even to confer immortality" (156 d). And in fact the verb *athanatizein* (cf. Herodotus 5. 4) does not mean "to pretend to be immortal" but "to make themselves immortal."[22] The meaning of this "immortalization" is indicated in the story handed down by Herodotus; when Zalmoxis entertained his guests ("the chief among his countrymen"), he "taught them that neither he nor [they] nor any of their descendants should ever die, but that they should go to a place where they would live forever and have all good things" (4. 95). In other words, this happy postexistence was not general, but was to be obtained through an initiation—a point that approximates the cult founded by Zalmoxis to the Greek and Hellenistic Mysteries. In his description of Zalmoxis' rite, Hellanicus, who was older than Herodotus but who follows his account, correctly denominates it "*teletai,*" thus emphasizing its initiatory nature.[23]

Hellanicus also refers to the Terizoi and the Krobyzi, two Thracian tribes who were neighbors of the Getae in the Pontic region: they too believe that they do not die and affirm that those who have passed away go to Zalmoxis. However, their sojourn with the god is not final, for "the dead are believed to return." This is why, when someone dies, "they rejoice at the thought that he will return."[24] Indeed, they bring offerings and amuse themselves in order that "the dead person may return."[25] Details of the return of the dead are found only in Photius, Suidas, and Pomponius Mela (2. 2. 18). According to Pomponius, three beliefs concerning the postexistence of the soul were found among the Thracians, the first of those he reports affirming that the dead return: *alii* [among the Thracians] *redituras putant animas obeuntium.* According

22. Cf. I. M. Linforth, "*Oi athanatizontes,* Herodotus IV. 93–96" (*Classical Philology* 13 [1918]: 23–33).

23. F. Jacoby, *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (1923–et seq.), frg. 73. The Emperor Julian repeats the same tradition; the Getae are convinced that they do not die but are taken to Zalmoxis (*De Caes.* 327, D).

24. Cf. J. Coman, "Zalmoxis," p. 108.

25. Suidas, *s.v.* "Zalmoxis."

to another opinion, souls will not return; however, they are not extinguished but begin a happy existence (*etsi non redeant, non extingui tamen, sed ad beatiora transire*). Finally, a third belief more nearly resembles a pessimistic philosophy than a popular eschatology: souls die, but it is better to die than to live (*emori quidem, sed id melius esse quam vivere*).

As we see, the very few sources of information available to us apart from Herodotus make the problem even more complicated. Let us first try to understand what could be meant by the "return of the dead" to which the sources used by Photius, Suidas, and Pomponius Mela refer. The affirmation nowhere implies metempsychosis, as has sometimes been maintained,[26] though an allusion in Euripides makes it probable that there was a belief in reincarnation among the Thracians.[27] It is possible that the statements concerning the "return of the dead," which in any case are late, rest on a confused interpretation of Herodotus' text: convinced by Zalmoxis, the Getae believed in the immortality of the soul, and Zalmoxis reappeared after four years; hence the dead go to Zalmoxis for a time and then return to earth. Another possible interpretation would be a funerary ritual intended to bring about the periodic return of the dead. Such rituals are documented in the Mediterranean, Greek, and Balkan areas as well as elsewhere (Germans, Finno-Ugrians, etc.). The detail that the Terizoi and Krobyzi sacrifice and amuse themselves "to make the dead return" brings to mind a number of similar customs, the most spectacular of which is documented among the Cheremis.[28] It is also possible that the "return of the dead" is a more recent innovation, the

26. Erwin Rohde, *Psyche* (2 vols.; 4th ed.; Tübingen, 1907): 2: 31.

27. Rohde, ibid. Herbert S. Long, *A Study of the Doctrine of Metempsychosis in Greece from Pythagoras to Plato* (Princeton, 1948), p. 8, rightly rejects Rohde's interpretation: Zalmoxis cannot teach metempsychosis, since he does not reappear in another form. A similar view is maintained by J. A. Philip, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism* (University of Toronto Press, 1966), p. 153. See also A. Cameron, *The Pythagorean Background of the Theory of Recollection* (Wisconsin, 1938), pp. 13 ff.

28. Cf. Uno Holmberg, *Die Religion der Tcheremissen*, FFC, No. 61 (Porvoo, 1926), pp. 27 ff.

result of Iranian and Germanic influences, which were active in the time of Decebalus.[29]

But however it is to be interpreted, the theme has nothing to do with what Herodotus reports concerning the teaching of Zalmoxis and what the Greeks, from the fifth century on, had learned about the beliefs of the Getae. What had interested the Greeks was that Zalmoxis conferred immortality and that, after death, his disciples went to him "in a place where they would have all good things." Herodotus does not say that the soul, separated from the body, will go to Zalmoxis after death. If he had not added other details about the cult of Zalmoxis, it would have been possible to interpret his text in the light of the Homeric doctrine: immortality is inaccessible to mankind; the few nondivine beings who escaped death (Achilles, Menelaus, etc.) were miraculously transported to distant and fabulous regions (Isles of the Blessed, etc.), where they continue to *live,* that is, to enjoy an existence in the flesh. The same could have been said of the initiates into the *teletai* of Zalmoxis: they did not die, they would not experience the separation of the soul from the body, they would go to be with Zalmoxis in a paradisal country.

But Herodotus also reports (4. 94) the ritual peculiar to Zalmoxis: the dispatch, every four years, of a messenger. The man chosen by lot is hurled aloft and, falling, is transfixed by spearpoints. Hence it is clear that it is the messenger's soul that goes to Zalmoxis. Let us disregard for the moment the coexistence of such a human sacrifice with a religious initiation that confers immortality. What seems to be certain is that for the Getae, just as for the initiates into the Eleusinian Mysteries or for the "Orphics," the blissful postexistence begins *after death:* it is only the "soul," the spiritual principle, that goes to Zalmoxis.

But it is precisely this autonomy of the soul, together with certain paranormal phenomena (ecstasy, cataleptic trance, etc.) alleged to prove the transmigration or even the immortality of the soul, that astonished and fascinated the Greeks. And since Zal-

29. See some bibliographical references in Joseph Wiesner, *Die Thraker* (Stuttgart, 1963), p. 225, n. 53.

moxis figured directly in it, it will be useful to examine more closely a certain strongly historicized mythology related to ecstasy, death, and the peregrinations of the soul.

ECSTATICS AND THAUMATURGES

Strabo (7. 67) named Zalmoxis with Amphiaraus, Trophonius, Orpheus, and Musaeus, that is, with personages famous for their mantic and thaumaturgic powers and their ecstatic experiences.[30] Amphiaraus was a Theban hero who was swallowed up by the earth: Zeus made him immortal.[31] Trophonius was chiefly known for his oracle at Lebadea, of which Pausanias (9. 39) has left us a celebrated description.[32] The ecstatic experiences of Orpheus, which were "shamanic" in type, are well known: he goes down to Hades to bring back the soul of Eurydice; he is a healer and musician, he charms and controls wild animals; his head, cut off by the Bacchantes and thrown into the Hebrus, floats to Lesbos, singing. It then serves as an oracle, like the head of Mimir and the skulls of Yukagir shamans.[33] As for the mythical singer Musaeus, Plato retells the story according to which he and his son were guided to Hades by the gods: there they see the saints, crowned and lying on their couches, diverting themselves and drinking—a vulgar image of bliss, on which Plato ironically comments: "as if the fairest meed of virtue were an everlasting drunk!" (*Republic* 2. 363 c-d.)

Then too, from antiquity on, Pythagoras—the "model" for Zalmoxis—was connected with such figures as Aristeas, Abaris, Epimenides, Phormion, and Empedocles.[34] We shall later consider the interest of such a classification. For the moment, let us recall that Rohde compared the cults of Zalmoxis and Dionysus, emphasizing the Thracian character of enthusiasm and belief in immortality.[35] Half a century after the publication of *Psyche,* Karl Meuli, in a celebrated study, interpreted the legends of Aristeas and Abaris as reflecting shamanic experiences peculiar to the Scythians who lived north of the Black Sea.[36] The eminent Swiss scholar concluded that Zalmoxis resembled Abaris, more particularly in being a shaman or the mythical image of a shaman.[37] W. K. C. Guthrie and E. R. Dodds have elaborated on the researches of Rohde and Meuli. Guthrie sees in Zalmoxis the representative of the genuine Thracian religion, the Getic god being a "brother-god" of Dionysus.[38] For his part, Dodds considers Orpheus "a Thracian figure of much the same kind as Zalmoxis—a mythical shaman or prototype of shamans."[39] Finally, Walter Burkert has recently both systematized the data on Greek shamanism and brilliantly analyzed the traditions concerning Pythagoras, emphasizing certain shamanic characteristics.[40]

As we see, the ancient authors as well as certain modern scholars have compared Zalmoxis to Dionysus and Orpheus on the one hand and, on the other, to mythical or strongly mythologized

30. See also Rohde, *Psyche* 1: 121, n. 1.

31. Cf. Euripides, *Suppliants* 925 f.; Sophocles, *Electra* 833; Pausanias 9. 8. 3. See also Angelo Brelich, *Gli Eroi Greci* (Rome, 1958), *s.v.;* Jack Lindsay, *The Clashing Rocks* (London, 1965), pp. 154 ff.

32. The myths concerning Trophonius are various and seemingly contradictory. A. Brelich has made a brilliant attempt to work out an intelligible structure for them (*Gli Eroi Greci,* pp. 46 ff.). See also Marcel Detienne, *Les maîtres de vérité dans la Grèce archaïque* (Paris, 1967), pp. 45 ff.

33. Cf. M. Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (tr. Willard R. Trask, New York, 1964), pp. 391–92. Cf. also E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1951), p. 147.

34. See the references assembled by Walter Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft,* p. 123, n. 161.

35. Rohde, *Psyche* 2: 27 ff.

36. Karl Meuli, "Scythica" (*Hermes* 70 [1953]: 121–67), especially pp. 153–64.

37. Meuli, ibid., p. 163.

38. W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods* (London, 1950), p. 176.

39. E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational,* p. 147.

40. Walter Burkert, "*Goês.* Zum griechischen 'Schamanismus'" (*Rheinisches Museum für Philologie,* n.s. vol. 105 [1962]: 36–55); Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft,* pp. 98 ff. Cf. J. A. Philip, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism,* pp. 159–62, for a critical discussion of Pythagorean "shamanism." See also M. Detienne, *La notion de Daimôn dans le pythagorisme ancien* (Paris, 1963), pp. 60 ff.

figures whose specific characteristic was a technique of ecstasy of the shamanic type, or prophetic power, or descents to Hades ("katabases"). Let us examine more closely the extremely rich and complex morphology of these specialists in the sacred.

Abaris, a native of the land of the Hyperboreans and a priest of Apollo, was endowed with oracular and magical powers (for example, bilocation). Herodotus (4. 36) writes that he "carried his arrow over the whole earth, fasting," but from the time of Heraclides (fr. 51 c) it was said that Abaris flew on an arrow.[41] Now the arrow, which plays a certain role in the mythology and religion of the Scythians,[42] is present in Siberian shamanic ceremonies.[43]

It is again Herodotus (4. 14) who gives us the essentials of the legend of Aristeas of Proconnesus (a city on an island in the Sea of Marmara). After mentioning that Aristeas relates in an epic poem that, "possessed by Phoebus," he traveled to the country of the Issedones, where he was told of their neighbors the Arimaspians ("men who are said to have but one eye") and the Hyperboreans (4, 15), Herodotus relates what he had heard about him in Proconnesus and Cyzicus. Entering the shop of a fuller in Proconnesus, Aristeas died there, and the fuller, shutting up his shop, set out to inform his relatives. The news of his death had spread through the city, when a man from Cyzicus declared that he had met Aristeas on his way to Cyzicus "and had talked with him." And in fact, when the door of the fuller's shop was opened, "Aristeas was not there, either dead or alive." After seven years he was said to have reappeared in Proconnesus and to have disappeared for the second time. Herodotus adds what happened to the people of Metapontum, in Italy, "two hundred and forty years

41. The sources have recently been analyzed by Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft*, pp. 126–27. Cf. also the bibliographical references in Wiesner, *Die Thraker*, p. 218, n. 64.

42. Cf. Meuli, "Scythica," pp. 161 ff.; Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, pp. 140 ff.

43. Cf., for example, Eliade, *Shamanism*, p. 217; see also Eliade, "Notes on the symbolism of the arrow" (in *Religions in Antiquity. Essays in Memory of E. R. Goodenough*, ed. by Jacob Neusner [Leiden, 1968], pp. 463–75), pp. 463–65.

after the second disappearance of Aristeas." They affirm that Aristeas appeared to them in person, ordered them to build an altar to Apollo and to erect beside it "a statue bearing the name of Aristeas of Proconnesus; he told them that they were the only Italiotes whom Apollo had yet visited; and that he, who was now Aristeas, had accompanied him; in those days, when he accompanied the god, he was a crow. This said, he had disappeared" (4. 14–15).[44] Let us note certain distinctively shamanic characteristics: ecstasy with all the appearance of death, bilocation, appearance in the form of a crow.

Hermotimus of Clazomenae, whom certain authors held to be an earlier incarnation of Pythagoras, had the power to leave his body for several years. During this long ecstasy he traveled great distances and, on his return, prophesied the future. But one day when he was lying inanimate his enemies burned his body, and his soul never came back.[45] Epimenides of Crete had "slept" for a long time in the cave of Zeus on Mount Ida; there he had fasted and had learned to enter into prolonged ecstasies. When he left

44. On Aristeas, cf. Meuli, "Scythica," pp. 153 ff.; Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods*, pp. 193 ff.; Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft*, pp. 124 ff. See also Eliade, *Le chamanisme*, p. 306 and n. 4 (English translation, p. 388 and n. 50). In his *Aristeas of Proconnesus* (Oxford, 1962) J. D. P. Bolton offers a "historicistic" interpretation of the legend: a devotee of Apollo "with a fervor more commonly felt by the initiates of Dionysus for their god," Aristeas decided to go to the land of the Hyperboreans, and joined an expedition to the north of the Black Sea. He was so obsessed by this undertaking that he had psychosomatic difficulties. These crises were interpreted by his fellow citizens as "death and resurrection," and by Aristeas as proof that he was possessed by Apollo. The journey, which was real, took him to the land of the Scythians and the Issedones, where he learned many legends of these peoples and their neighbors. Returning to Proconnesus after more than six years, Aristeas recounted his experiences in a poem that the Greeks later named *Arimaspea* (Bolton, pp. 179 ff.). The hypothesis is not convincing. In any case, it is not pertinent, for it is only as a fabulous figure that Aristeas exists in the history of Greek culture.

45. Rhode, *Psyche* 2: 94 ff., with the sources (especially Pliny *Naturalis Historia* 7. 174). Cf. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, p. 141 and n. 39, with other examples of disappearance and reappearance, for example Sophocles (*Electra* 62 ff.), who, under the influence of his friend Herodotus, rationalizes a mythical tradition.

the cave, having mastered "enthusiastic wisdom," that is, a certain technique of ecstasy, he traveled everywhere, foretelling the future, explaining the hidden meaning of the past, and purifying cities from the miasmas brought on by their crimes.[46] Burkert also cites the legends of Phormion and Leonymus. Phormion was cured of a wound after an ecstatic journey to a strange land belonging to "mystical geography." And it was also to cure a wound that the Delphic oracle advised Leonymus to go to the "White Island" that is the abode of Achilles and Ajax. Leonymus traveled to the "White Island"—later localized in the Black Sea, but originally identical with the "White Rocks" of the otherworld—and returned cured. In both cases we have an ecstatic journey of the shamanic type, later explained by certain authors (Tertullian, Hermias) as a journey made in dream.[47]

THE SHAMAN-PHILOSOPHERS

To this list of fabulous personages in whose *gesta* the recollection of shamanic powers has been discerned, some scholars have added the names of Parmenides, Empedocles, and Pythagoras. H. Diels had already compared the mystical journey described by Parmenides in his poem to the ecstatic journeys of Siberian shamans.[48] Meuli returned to the subject and likened Parmenides' vision to shamanic poetry.[49] More recently still, and with different arguments, Morrison, Burkert, and Guthrie have compared Parmenides to a shaman.[50]

As for Empedocles, Dodds writes that his fragments represent

46. See the sources cited by Rohde, *Psyche* 2: 96 f.; Guthrie, *The Greeks and Their Gods,* p. 197, n. 1; Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft,* p. 128. Cf. also Marcel Detienne, *Les maîtres de vérité,* pp. 129 ff.

47. Sources and bibliography in Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft,* p. 129.

48. H. Diehls, *Parmenides' Lehrgedicht* (Berlin, 1897), pp. 14 ff.

49. Meuli, "Scythica," pp. 171 ff.

50. J. S. Morrison, "Parmenides and Er" (*Journal of Hellenic Studies* 75 [1955]: 59–68), especially p. 59; Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft,* pp. 256 ff.; W. K. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* 2 (Cambridge, 1965): 11 ff. See also M. Detienne, *Les maîtres de vérité,* pp. 139 ff. and the bibliography given in n. 114.

"the one first-hand source from which we can still form some notion of what a Greek shaman was really like; he is the last belated example of a species which with his death became extinct in the Greek world, though it still flourished elsewhere" (*The Greeks and the Irrational,* p. 145). This interpretation has been rejected by Charles H. Kahn: "Empedocles' soul does not leave his body like that of Hermotimus and Epimenides. He does not ride on an arrow like Abaris, or appear in the form of a raven like Aristeas. He is never seen in two places at the same time, and he does not even descend to the Underworld like Orpheus and Pythagoras."[51]

Dodds considers Pythagoras "a greater Greek shaman," who no doubt had drawn theoretical conclusions from his ecstatic experiences and consequently believed in metempsychosis (*The Greeks and the Irrational,* pp. 143 f.). But it is especially Burkert who has subjected all the sources for the legend of Pythagoras to a rigorous analysis, and so has shown that the principal traditions can be fitted into the same mythico-ritual scenario that is characteristic of the fabulous figures we have just examined.[52] And in fact the legends of Pythagoras refer to his relations with gods and spirits,[53] his mastery over animals (Burkert, *Weisheit,* pp. 118 ff.), his presence in several places at the same time (ibid., p. 133). Burkert explains Pythagoras' famous "golden shoulder" by comparing it to an initiation of the shamanic type (ibid., p. 134). For it is known that during their initiation Siberian shamans are believed to have their organs renewed and their bones sometimes joined together with iron.[54] Pythagoras' peregrinations relate him to Epimenides and Empedocles, in whom Burkert also sees quasi-shamans (p. 135). Finally, Pythagoras' catabasis (see above, pp. 24–25) is an-

51. Charles H. Kahn, "Religion and Natural Philosophy in Empedocles' Doctrine of the Soul" (*Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 42 [1960]: 3–35), particularly pp. 30 ff. ("Empedocles among the Shamans").

52. Cf. Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft,* pp. 118 ff., the list of miraculous legends concerning Pythagoras, with their sources and the recent bibliography.

53. Cf. the documentation in Burkert, ibid., pp. 118 ff.; see also pp. 163 ff.

54. Cf. Eliade, *Shamanism,* p. 36.

other shamanic element (ibid., pp. 136 ff.). Hieronymus of Rhodes relates that Pythagoras went down to Hades and there saw the souls of Homer and Hesiod atoning for all the evil they had spoken of the gods.[55]

GREEK SHAMANISM

We have elsewhere discussed the problem of Greek shamanism.[56] For our present purpose, it is enough to recall that some authors (and first of all Dodds) explain the dissemination of shamanic techniques and mythologies by contact between the Greek colonies on the Hellespont and the Black Sea and the Iranian peoples (i.e., the Scythians). But Karl Meuli, who had been the first to point out the shamanic structure of certain Scythian customs, and had shown their reflection in Greek traditions, had also identified shamanic elements in Greek epic poetry.[57] Burkert considers the *goes* the authentic Greek shaman, since he is connected with the cult of the dead.[58] Finally, E. H. S. Butterworth has recently sought to find shamanism in archaic Greece: he is of the opinion that at least three of the most important clan cults of continental Greece in the fourteenth-thirteenth centuries have their origin in "shamanism."[59]

One of the difficulties of the problem lies in the various meanings that scholars choose to give to the terms "shaman" and

55. Fr. 42 (ed. Wehrli); cf. Burkert, *Weisheit und Wissenschaft*, p. 82, n. 32, and p. 136.

56. See M. Eliade, *Shamanism*, pp. 387 ff.; cf. M. Detienne, *La notion de Daimôn*, pp. 81 ff.; Alois Closs, "Der Schamanismus bei den Indoeuropäern" (*Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft und Kulturkunde, Gedenkenschrift für Wilhelm Brandenstein* [Innsbruck, 1968], pp. 289–302), especially pp. 296–97.

57. Meuli, "Scythica," pp. 164 ff.; *contra*, Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, p. 164, n. 47.

58. Burkert, "*Goês.* Zum griechischen 'Schamanismus,'" pp. 43 ff.

59. E. A. S. Butterworth, *Some Traces of the Pre-Olympian World in Greek Literature and Myth* (Berlin, 1966), pp. 135–73; Jack Lindsay, *The Clashing Rocks*, pp. 247 ff. We have examined the most recent literature on shamanism in an article soon to appear in *History of Religions*.

"shamanism." *Stricto sensu*, shamanism is preeminently a Siberian and Central Asian religious phenomenon, but it is also documented elsewhere (North and South America, Indonesia, Oceania, etc.). It is out of the question even to summarize the materials and analyses of our *Shamanism* here. It will be enough if we remind the reader that shamanic initiation includes dividing the body into fragments, renewal of the organs and viscera, and ritual death followed by resurrection, experienced by the future shaman as a descent to the Underworld (sometimes accompanied by an ascent to the sky). The shaman is above all an ecstatic. Now, on the plane of archaic and traditional religions, ecstasy signifies the flight of the soul to heaven, or its wandering over the earth, or, finally, its descent to the subterranean regions, among the dead.

The shaman undertakes such ecstatic journeys: (1) to meet the Celestial God face to face and present him with an offering on behalf of the community; (2) to seek the soul of a sick person, which is believed to have wandered from his body or to have been carried off by demons; (3) to accompany the soul of a dead person to its new abode; (4) finally, to enrich his knowledge by conversing with higher Beings. To prepare himself for his ecstatic journeys, the shaman must put on his ritual costume and beat his drum (or play some other designated instrument). During his ecstasy he is able to change into a wild beast and in that form to fight with other shamans. In consequence of his ability to travel in supernatural worlds and see superhuman beings (gods, demons, spirits of the dead, etc.), the shaman has contributed decisively to the *knowledge of death*. It is probable that a great many features of "funerary geography," as well as some themes of the mythology of death, are the result of the ecstatic experiences of shamans. It is equally probable that a large number of epic "subjects" or motifs are, in the last analysis, of ecstatic origin, in the sense that they were drawn from the accounts of shamans narrating their journeys and adventures in the superhuman worlds.

In the light of these few facts it is obvious that some of the more or less fabulous personages whom we have just passed in review—Orpheus, Abaris, Aristeas, Hermotimus, even Pythagoras and Parmenides—exhibit unmistakably shamanic characteristics. But what Herodotus tells us about Zalmoxis is foreign to the system

of shamanic or shamanizing mythologies, beliefs, and techniques. On the contrary, as we saw above (p. 30), the most characteristic features of his cult (*andreon* and banquets, occultation in an "underground chamber" and epiphany after four years, "immortalization" of the soul, and the doctrine of a blissful existence in another world) relate Zalmoxis to the Mysteries.

ZALMOXIS, ECSTASY, AND IMMORTALITY

However, this does not imply the absence of shamanic ideas, techniques, or patterns of behavior among the Geto-Dacians. Like all the Thracians, the Getae too were acquainted with ecstasy. Strabo (7. 3. 3) reports, after Posidonius, that the Mysians, in obedience to their religion, abstain from all flesh food, contenting themselves with honey, milk, and cheese, and for this reason they are called both "those who fear God" (*theosebeis*) and "those who walk in smoke" (*kapnobatai*).[60] The same information is probably valid for the Getae too. As for the terms *theosebeis* and *kapnobatai*, they in all likelihood designate certain religious personages and not the whole people (see further on, p. 61). It is probable that the expression "walkers in smoke" refers to an ecstasy induced by the smoke of hemp, a technique known to the Scythians[61] and the Thracians (if we interpret a passage in Pomponius Mela in this sense).[62] If this is so, the *kapnobatai* would be Mysian and Getic dancers and sorcerers ("shamans") who used the smoke of hemp to induce ecstatic trances.

We will return to these specialists in the sacred, who are documented in Dacia (further on, p. 64). But the *kapnobatai* are not mentioned in connection with Zalmoxis, and nothing warrants our supposing that such a "shamanizing" technique formed a part of his cult. From the time of Rohde and Meuli many scholars have commented on an account by Polyaenus (*Stratagemata* 7. 22) concerning Cosingas, king of the Thracian tribes of the Cebrenoi and Sycaiboai, who was at the same time the high priest of Hera: when his subjects became recalcitrant, Cosingas threatened to climb up to the goddess by means of a wooden ladder, to complain of their conduct.[63] Ritual ascent to heaven by stairs is typically shamanic, but the symbolism of the ladder is also documented in other religions of the ancient Near East and the Mediterranean.[64] However, the information Polyaenus furnishes is also valuable for other reasons. As we shall see, according to Strabo, Zalmoxis—presented as a sort of high priest—persuaded the king to accept him as an associate in the government, thus establishing an institution that survived in Dacia. (As for the high priest Comosicus, he became king himself on the sovereign's death, thus exercising the two offices together.) But according to Suidas, Hera was the Greek variant of Zalmoxis,[65] and in late antiquity the goddess Hera was interpreted as the personification of the atmosphere.[66] Coman sees in this an argument for the celestial conception of Zalmoxis.[67] What is beyond doubt is that in the strongly rationalized episode in Polyaenus we can detect an ancient Thracian ritual of ecstatic ("shamanic"?) ascent to heaven.

To conclude, the examples we have briefly analyzed do not justify our putting Zalmoxis in the class of "shamans." But our investigation has not been fruitless. For a number of ancient authors constantly compared Zalmoxis to historic or fabulous figures all of whom are characterized by certain special accomplishments or powers: descent to Hades, initiation, ecstasy, shamanic trance, eschatological doctrines related to "immortality" or metempsychosis, and so on. It is certainly to this religious and cultural milieu, peculiar especially to the Thracians and the related Balkan and

60. Pârvan, *Getica*, p. 162, had translated *Kapnobatai* as "those who walk in the clouds," but the meaning is "walkers in smoke"; cf. also Coman, "Zalmoxis," p. 106.

61. Herodotus 4. 73 f.; Meuli, "Scythica," pp. 122 ff.; Eliade, *Le chamanisme*, pp. 310 ff. (English translation, pp. 394 ff.).

62. Pomponius Mela 2. 21; cf. Rohde, *Psyche* 2: 17 and n. 1.

63. See other examples in Cook, *Zeus* 2: 129 ff.

64. Cf. Eliade, *Shamanism*, pp. 487 ff.

65. Suidas, *s.v.* "Zalmoxis." Diodorus (1. 94) writes that Zalmoxis claimed to be in communication with Hestia.

66. Sallust and Firmicus Maternus, cited by Coman, "Zalmoxis," p. 95, n. 2.

67. Coman, ibid., p. 95.

Carpatho-Danubian peoples, that Zalmoxis belongs. There was something true in the stereotypes, so popular in Greece from the time of Herodotus, that set Zalmoxis beside Pythagoras, Orpheus, Musaeus, and later beside Zoroaster, the "Egyptian sages," or the Druids. All these figures were believed to have had ecstatic experiences and to have revealed "mysteries" concerning the human soul and its survival. Even the statement of Mnasias of Patrae, the pupil of Eratosthenes, to the effect that the Getae worship Cronus and call him Zalmoxis can be interpreted in the same sense. For Cronus is the sovereign of the Isles of the Blessed, to which only the pious are admitted.[68] In other words, it is always a question of a blissful postexistence in an "otherworld" that does not belong to profane geography but that is not one of the underground infernos to which the shades of the uninitiated go. Even these fragmentary and to some extent contradictory accounts enable us to discern that the cult instituted by Zalmoxis was centered upon an experience that can be termed "eschatological" since it assures the initiate of a blissful postexistence in a paradisal beyond.

But the fact that Zalmoxis was compared to Cronus or to certain specialists in ecstasy (ecstasy being considered a temporary death, for the soul was believed to leave the body) had prepared the way for the modern interpretation of Zalmoxis as a god of the dead.

ETYMOLOGIES AND HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

If Zalmoxis has been interpreted as a chthonico-funerary god, it is above all because of the "underground chamber" to which he retired, and also because, still according to Herodotus, the Getae went to be with him after death. Even the etymology of his name appeared to confirm such a chthonico-funerary function. For antiquity, besides the form *Zalmoxis* (Herodotus, Plato, Diodorus, Apuleius, Jordanes, Porphyry, etc.), also recognized the variant *Zamolxis* (Lucian, Diogenes Laertius, etc.).[69] Obviously, one of these forms derives from the other by metathesis. Porphyry (*Vita Pyth.* 14) had tried to explain the variant Zalmoxis by Thracian *zalmos,* "skin, fur," which was consistent with an anecdote

68. Cf. Pfeister, "Zalmoxis," p. 1116. Already in Pindar *Olymp.* 2. 68 ff. Cf. Diogenes Laertius 8. I. 2.

69. G. I. Kazarow, "Zalmoxis" (*Klio* 12 [1912]: 355–64), pp. 363–64; Russu, "Zalmoxis," p. 86.

according to which a bearskin was thrown over Zalmoxis at his birth.[70] Some authors (Rohde, Deubner, Kazarow, etc.) had deduced from this etymology that Zalmoxis was originally a "Bärengott."[71] The hypothesis has recently been revived by Rhys Carpenter, who classes the Getic god among other "sleeping bears."[72]

The other etymology interpreted the name from the stem *zamol,* for which M. Praetorius (1688) had already proposed the meaning "earth." In 1852 Cless compared Zalmoxis to the Lithuanian god of the earth, Zameluks (Ziameluks).[73] But it is P. Kretschmer who, in 1935, elaborated the linguistic proof by comparing Zemelo (in the Greco-Phrygian funerary inscriptions from Asia Minor) with its analogues, the Thracian *zemelen* ("earth") and Semele (the "Earth goddess," mother of Dionysus), all of which terms are derived from the Indo-European root **g'hemel-* "earth, soil, belonging to the earth" (cf. also Avestan *zam,* "earth," Lithuanian *žêmé,* Lettish *zeme,* Old Prussian *same, semme,* Old Slavic *zemlja,* "earth, country").[74] Kretschmer interprets the terminal element of the

70. After recalling that at Cyzicus, near the Hellespont, the infant Zeus's nurses were said to have been changed into she-bears, just as had happened in Crete (*Zeus* 1: 112, n. 3 and n. 5), Cook concludes that Zalmoxis was the Thracian appellative of the newborn Zeus (ibid., 2: part 1: 230).

71. Cf. the references in Clemen, "Zalmoxis," pp. 56 ff.; Russu, "Zalmoxis," p. 88.

72. Rhys Carpenter, *Folk-tale, Fiction and Saga in the Homeric Epics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1946), pp. 113 ff. Cf. also E. Roux, *Le problème des Argonautes* (Paris, 1949), p. 255.

73. Cf. Russu, "Religia Geto-Dacilor," p. 88, citing the views of Cless, Rhousopolous, Bessell, and Tomaschek. On Žemeluks, Zemininka, Zemyna, and other names of Lithuanian divinities, cf. H. Usener, *Götternamen* (Leipzig, 1920), pp. 104 ff.

74. P. Kretschmer, "Zum Balkanskythischen" (*Glotta* 24 [1935]: 1–56), pp. 45 ff.; cf. Russu, "Religia Geto-Dacilor," pp. 88 ff.; Russu, *Limba Traco-Dacilor* (2d ed.; Bucharest, 1967), p. 128; see also Alfons Nehring, "Studien zur indogermanischen Kultur und Urheimat" (*Die Indogermanen- und Germanenfrage = Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik* 4 [Salzburg-Leipzig, 1936]: 7–229), pp. 214 ff.; F. R. Schroeder, "Sinfjötli" (*Hommage à Georges Dumézil* [Brussels, 1960]: 192–200), pp. 195 ff. (where Schroeder maintains that Zalmoxis is the Thracian name of the god who arrived in Greece under the name of Dionysus).

name (Zamol)-*xis* (which also appears in the names of the kings Lipoxais, Arpoxais, and Colaxais; Herodotus 4. 5–6) by Scythian *-xais*, "lord, prince, king." Accordingly, "Zalmoxis" would mean "King, Master of Men."

But the juxtaposition of a Scythian stem with a Thracian word is scarcely admissible. In addition, it has been rightly pointed out that the terminal element of Zalmoxis cannot be a radical *x(-a)is* but must be merely a derivative suffix *z-(x)*, "the value or particular meaning of which cannot be accurately determined."[75] At the same time that he rejects Kretschmer's interpretation—"King, Master of Men"—Russu also rejects Rohde's hypothesis (adopted, among others, by Clemen[76]) that Zalmoxis was originally the Lord of the Dead. For the learned Thracianist, the semantic value of the stem *zamol-* is "earth" and "the power of the earth," and Zalmoxis can only be the "earth god," personification of the source of life and the maternal womb to which men return.[77]

But, whatever we may think of this etymology, we may well ask how far it helps us to perceive the structure of the god. No ancient source mentions chthonico-funerary ceremonies in honor of Zalmoxis.[78] The documents at our disposal emphasize the role of Zalmoxis in making it possible to obtain the "immortalization" of the soul. It is true that initiates are believed to go to Zalmoxis after their death, but this does not mean that the god is the Sovereign of the Dead. Zalmoxis' disappearance, his "death," is equivalent to a *descensus ad inferos* as a means of initiation (cf. above, p. 27). By imitating the divine model, the neophyte undergoes a ritual "death" precisely in order to obtain the non-death, the "immortality" which the sources emphasize.

75. Russu, "Religia Geto-Dacilor," p. 92. Cf. also D. Detschew, *Die Thrakischen Sprachreste* (Vienna, 1957), s.v. Zalmoxis. On the language of the Thracians see, in addition to the works by Dečev and Russu already cited, D. Dečev, *Charakteristik der thrakischen Sprache* (Sophia, 1952), German text, pp. 63–119; V. Pisani, "Libri recenti sulla lingua dei Traci" (*Paideia* 16 [1961]: 238–58); cf. the reply by I. I. Russu, *Limba Traco-Dacilor*, pp. 223–30) and the critical analyses by E. Lozovan, "Onomastique roumaine et balkanique" (*Revue Internationale d'Onomastique* 17 [1965]: 225–36), especially pp. 230 ff.

76. Clemen, "Zalmoxis," p. 58.

77. Russu, "Religia," p. 93.

78. Clemen, "Zalmoxis" (p. 60) compared the sacrifice of the messenger to sacrifices for the benefit of crops. We shall see farther on (p. 48) why the comparison is not convincing. Tomaschek had already interpreted Zalmoxis' disappearance and reappearance in an "agricultural" sense; cf. "Die alten Thraker" 2 (*Sitzungsbericht, Akad. Wien* 130 [1893]: 2: 1–70), pp. 63, 67.

This is true, furthermore, of the other Greco-Oriental Mysteries; their possible chthonico-agricultural or funerary "origins" do not explain the structure of the initiation properly speaking. We must carefully distinguish between the divinities of the Mysteries and the divinities of the dead. The gods and goddesses of the dead reign over the whole nation of the dead, whereas the divinities of the Mysteries admit only initiates into their realm. In addition, we are confronted with two different eschatological geographies: the glorious land that awaits initiates into the Mysteries is not the same as the subterranean infernos to which the mass of the dead repair.

ZALMOXIS AND FREYR

From the time of Jacob Grimm down to Neckel and Jan de Vries, a number of Germanists have compared the occultation of Zalmoxis to the death of Freyr, god of fertility.[79] According to the *Ynglinga Saga*, Freyr was the king of Sweden; he died of an illness, and was buried under a mound. But his death was kept secret. Three openings were made in the mound, into which gold, silver, and iron were poured for three years. Saxo (*Gesta Danorum* 5. 142) relates a similar episode in connection with the Danish king Frotho: when he died he was embalmed, put into a chariot, and driven about the country for three years, so that the people should not learn the news. Now Frotho is only another name of Freyr.[80]

Neckel saw in this legend the influence of the Thracian myth of Zalmoxis on the northern Germans, transmitted through the Goths. Jan de Vries concludes that the case is, rather, one of ideas

79. Cf. Jacob Grimm, *Ueber Iornandes und die Geten* (Berlin, 1846); G. Neckel, *Die Ueberlieferungen vom Gotte Balder* (Dortmund, 1920), p. 119; F. R. Schröder, *Germanentum und Hellenismus* (Heidelberg, 1924), p. 64; Jan de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte* (2d ed.; Berlin, 1956–57), 2: 182 ff.

80. De Vries, ibid., 2: 185 ff.

common to the Thracians and the Germans, the ultimate source of which lies in mythology and the mystique of agriculture.[81]

The comparison is not convincing: it could be proposed only because Zalmoxis was considered to be the god of the earth and of agriculture, and hence analogous to Freyr. But the Scandinavian documents concern a mythical king whose body is hidden and his death kept secret for three years for political and economic reasons; they say nothing about his "return" to earth; whereas the occultation of Zalmoxis has as its purpose the founding of a Mystery and, as we have seen, belongs to an entirely different mythico-ritual scenario.

Neither the hypotheses supported by certain etymologies nor the comparisons with divinities of the type of Freyr succeed in establishing chthonico-funerary or agricultural values. Whatever his prehistory may have been, Zalmoxis as he was worshiped by the Geto-Dacians was neither an earth god, nor a god of agricultural fertility, nor a god of the dead.

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MESSENGER

A chthonico-funerary and agricultural interpretation has also been proposed for the human sacrifice of which Herodotus—and, incidentally, he alone—gives an account (4. 94). Yet the text is sufficiently clear. "Once in every five years they choose by lot one of their people and send him as a messenger to Salmoxis, charged to tell of their needs; and this is their manner of sending: Three lances are held by men thereto appointed; others seize the messenger to Salmoxis by his hands and feet, and swing and hurl him aloft on to the spear-point. If he be killed by the cast, they believe that the god regards them with favour; but if he be not killed, they blame the messenger himself, deeming him a bad man, and send another messenger in place of him whom they blame. It is while the man yet lives that they charge him with the message" (trans. A. D. Godley [slightly altered]).

Human sacrifice is documented in the history of religions both among the paleocultivators and among certain peoples whose civilization is more complex (for example, the Mesopotamians, the Indo-Europeans, the Aztecs, etc.). Such sacrifices are offered

81. De Vries, ibid., p. 183.

for a great variety of reasons: to assure the fertility of the soil (cf. the well-known example of the Khonds in India); to strengthen the life of the gods (as among the Aztecs); to re-establish contact with the mythical Ancestors or with recently dead relatives; or to repeat the primordial sacrifice of which the myths tell, and hence to assure the continuity of life and the society (cf. the example of Hainuwele). In another chapter of this book we shall have occasion to study the sacrifices offered to "animate" a building (or, in general, a "work"): in this case the sacrifice brings about the transfer of the victim's life and still untapped virtualities into another "body" (see chap. 5).

It is clear that the sacrifice Herodotus describes does not belong to any of these types. Its essential element is the sending of a messenger designated by lot and charged with communicating "their needs" to Zalmoxis. In essence, the sacrifice makes possible the sending of a message, in other words, *it reactualizes direct relations between the Getae and their god.*

This type of sacrifice is especially prevalent in Southeast Asia and the regions adjoining the Pacific, where slaves are immolated to inform the Ancestor of his descendants' desires. In the form that it assumes in southern Asia and in the Pacific region, the sacrifice of the slave-messenger does not represent one of the most archaic phases. Behind this mythico-ritual scenario we discern an earlier idea and one much more widely disseminated throughout the world, that is, the hope of being able to reactualize the primordial (i.e., mythical) situation when men could communicate, directly and *in concreto,* with their gods. According to the myths, this situation came to an end after a certain event, which obliged the gods to withdraw to Heaven and break off concrete communications with the Earth and men (the Cosmic Mountain was flattened, the Tree or Vine connecting Earth and Heaven was cut, etc.).[82]

It is in this category of rituals that we must put the sacrifice of the Getic messenger. He is not a slave or a prisoner of war, as is

82. On this mythical motif see Eliade, "La nostalgie du Paradis dans les traditions primitives" (*Mythes, rêves et mystères* [Paris, 1957], pp. 80–98); Eliade, "Australian Religion: An Introduction. Part II" (*History of Religions* 6 [1967]: 208–35), pp. 210 ff.; Eliade, *The Quest* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 82 ff.

the case in Asia and Oceania, but a free man, and, if our interpretation is correct, an "initiate" into the "Mysteries" established by Zalmoxis. Classical antiquity provides other examples of the custom of sending messengers or letters to the gods.[83] A still more striking parallel is the Altaic shaman's ecstatic journey to the seventh or ninth heaven, to carry the prayers of the tribe to Bai Ülgän and receive the god's blessings and the assurance that he will take thought for the well-being of his worshipers.[84] The journey to heaven is made in "ecstasy," that is, in the spirit: it is only the shaman's soul that undertakes the celestial ascent. But according to certain mythological traditions, in the beginning, *in illo tempore*, the meeting with the god took place in the flesh.

Every five years the Getae sent Zalmoxis the "soul" of a messenger, in order to re-establish contact with the god and to inform him of their "needs." This ritual renewal of a relationship that was formerly *concrete* between Zalmoxis and his worshipers is equivalent to the symbolic or sacramental *presence* of certain Mystery divinities at cult banquets. In both cases the *original situation*—that is, the time when the cult was established—is recovered. The worshipers can again communicate, as a group, with their god. The fact that a messenger is sent every five years clearly shows that the sacrifice is related to the years of Zalmoxis' occultation in his "underground chamber." The reappearance of the god in the myth corresponds to the re-establishment, in the ritual, of concrete communications (personal "needs") between Zalmoxis and his worshipers. The sacrifice and sending of the messenger in some sort constitute a symbolic (because ritual) repetition of the establishment of the cult; in other words, Zalmoxis' epiphany after three years of occultation is reactualized with all that it implies, especially the assurance of the soul's immortality and bliss. (Even though, as we pointed out earlier, the ritual scenario as Herodotus has transmitted it to us is certainly incomplete;[85] cf. p. 24.)

83. Pfister, "Zalmoxis," pp. 1114 ff.

84. Eliade, *Le chamanisme* (2d ed., 1968), pp. 160 ff. (English translation, pp. 190 ff.).

85. Pârvan regarded the fact that the messenger was sacrificed in the air as an additional proof of Zalmoxis' celestial structure (cf. *Getica*, pp. 151 ff.). The argument has a certain value. In the Arctic and central Asian religions in which sacrifices to the celestial and the chthonian divinities are found, the former are performed on high places and the offerings are left in trees; cf. Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions* (new ed., 1968), p. 63. So too in the cult of the Olympians the ancient Greeks sacrified the animal with its throat raised and on an altar of some height.

GEBELEÏZIS

After first citing the name of the god (*daimon*) Zalmoxis, Herodotus adds: "or Gebeleïzis, as some of them [i.e., the Getae] call him" (4. 94). This is the first—and the last—time that the name of this god appears in the literature. No other author after Herodotus mentioned Gebeleïzis. Tomaschek[86] had already seen in the name a parallel to the southern Thracian god Zbelsurdos, Zbeltiurdos,[87] and it is possible that the original Getic form was *Zebeleizis.[88] It was Tomaschek, again, who identified in Zbelsurdos the stem **z(i)bel* and the Indo-European root **g'heib*, "light, lightning."[89] The second part of the name, *-surdos*, he derived from the root **suer*, "bellow, hum." Hence both Zbelsurdos and *Zebeleizis (Gebeleïzis) would be gods of the storm, comparable to Donar, Taranis, Perkúnas, Perunù, and Parjaniya.[90]

Starting from Herodotus' statement, Kretschmer[91] tries to connect Zalmoxis and Gebeleïzis etymologically on the basis of the equivalence between the stems *zemele/gebele*, which implies the equivalence of the bases *zamol-* and *gebel*. In the last analysis Kretschmer saw in Gebeleïzis the Thracian name, and in Zalmoxis

86. Tomaschek, "Die alten Thraker," 2: 62.

87. On Zbeltiurdos cf. G. Seure, "Les images thraces de Zeus Keraunos: Zbelsurdos, Gebeleizis, Zalmoxis" (*Revue des études grecques* 26 [1913]: 225–61); A. B. Cook, *Zeus* 2: 1: 817–24; Kazarow, *Real-Encyclopaedie* 6, A (1936): 516–17; cf. also Russu, "Religia Geto-Dacilor," p. 107, n. 1.

88. Cf. Russu, "Religia Geto-Dacilor," p. 106.

89. Tomaschek, "Die alten Thraker," p. 61; cf. Dečev, *Charakteristik der thrakischen Sprache*, pp. 73, 81.

90. Russu, "Religia Geto-Dacilor," p. 109; cf. Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions*, pp. 79 ff., 107–11 (bibliographies).

91. Kretschmer, "Zum Balkanskythischen," pp. 47 ff.

the hybrid Scytho-Thracian name, of the same god.[92] Kretschmer's etymology was rejected by Russu[93] and other scholars, but it had the advantage of explaining Herodotus' statement that the Getae believed in *a single god,* whom some called Zalmoxis and others Gebeleïzis. The eminent archeologist Vasile Pârvan did not doubt the truth of Herodotus' assertion, and Jean Coman even discussed a Daco-Getic monotheism.[94] And in fact, after describing the sacrifice of a messenger to Zalmoxis, Herodotus adds: "Moreover when there is thunder and lightning these same Thracians shoot arrows skyward as a threat to the god, believing in no other god but their own" (4. 94; trans. A. D. Godley).

This passage, which unfortunately is vague, has given rise to lengthy discussions. C. Daicoviciu understands it as follows: "these same Thracians, when it thunders and lightens, shoot arrows toward the sky, threatening the god, for they think that (the god who thunders and lightens) is none other than theirs," that is, Gebeleïzis.[95]

Despite Herodotus' statement (expressed, it is true, with astonishing grammatical and stylistic carelessness), it is difficult to regard Zalmoxis and Gebeleïzis as one and the same god.[96] Their structures are different, their cults are not alike. Gebeleïzis is a god of

92. Kretschmer, ibid., p. 48.

93. Cf. Russu, "Religia Geto-Dacilor," pp. 108 ff.

94. Pârvan, *Getica,* pp. 151 ff.; Coman, "Zalmoxis," p. 85 ("premonotheism"); Coman, "Zalmoxis et Orphée" (*Serta Kazaroviana* 1 [Sofia, 1950], p. 183); cf. R. Pettazzoni, "Il 'monoteismo' dei Geti" (*Studia in honorem Acad. D. Dečev* [Sofia, 1958], pp. 649–55). The problem of "Geto-Dacian monotheism" belongs to the history of ideas in modern Romania, not to the history of religions (see below, p. 74). In any case it must not be forgotten that Mars was extremely popular among the Getae (cf. Virgil *Aeneid* 3. 35; Ovid *Tristia* 5. 3. 22, etc.).

95. C. Daicoviciu, "Herodot şi pretinsul monotheism al Geţilor" (*Apulum* 2 [Alba-Iulia, 1944–45]: 90–93).

96. As is maintained, for example, by Seure, "Les images thraces," p. 255, and Kazarow, "Zalmoxis," p. 356. For Kazarow, Zalmoxis was a god of the underworld (ibid., p. 357).

the storm, or, rather, an ancient sky god (if we follow Walde-Pokorny and Dečev, who derive his name from the Indo-European root **g"er,* "to shine").[97] The only rite known to us, the shooting of arrows during a thunderstorm, is found among primitive peoples such as the Semang of Malacca or the Yurakare of Bolivia, as well as in Asia. But the meaning of such rituals is not always the same. On the most archaic plane on which this kind of shooting is documented—the Yurakare, the Semang, the Sakai—the arrows are aimed at the god of storm and threaten him.[98] In Asia it is no longer the gods of the sky or the atmosphere who are threatened, but the demons, regarded as responsible for storms. In ancient China, too, when an eclipse occurred arrows were shot at the celestial Wolf in order to reconstitute the ritual space and reestablish the order of the world, threatened by the darkness.[99] On certain monuments Mithra is represented as shooting arrows at the clouds,[100] just as Indra did,[101] and similar rites are documented among the Caunians (Herodotus 1. 172) and survive in modern Bulgaria.[102]

In the light of these parallels, we may ask if Herodotus had rightly understood the meaning of the ritual. In all probability it was not the god (Gebeleïzis) who was threatened, but the demonic powers manifested in the clouds. In other words, what we have here is a positive ritual act: the god of lightning is imitated, and indirectly helped, by the shooting of arrows at the demons of darkness.

97. A. Walde-J. Pokorny, *Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der indogermanischen Sprachen* (3 vols.; Berlin, 1927–32) 1: 643; Dečev, *Charakteristik,* pp. 73, 81.

98. Cf. Eliade, "Notes on the symbolism of the arrow," pp. 465–66.

99. Marcel Granet, *Danses et légendes de la Chine ancienne* (Paris, 1926) 1: 233, n. 1; cf. 390 note 2:538 ff.

100. F. Saxl, *Mithras* (Berlin, 1931), p. 76; Widengren, *Die Religionen Irans,* pp. 44 ff. (French trans. *Les Religions de l'Iran,* pp. 62 ff.).

101. H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda* (3d ed.; Berlin, 1923), pp. 491, 494.

102. Kazarow, "Zalmoxis," pp. 356 ff.

However this may be, we must resign ourselves: we cannot reconstitute the structure, the function, and the "history" of Gebeleïzis with the help of an etymology and on the basis of a single document. The fact that Gebeleïzis is not referred to again after Herodotus does not necessarily imply his disappearance from the cult. It would be fruitless to lament the poverty of documents, but we must not lose sight of the fact that the statements of authors concerning the religious ideas and practices of the Geto-Dacians are fragmentary and often inaccurate. The few reliable documents handed down by ancient authors refer only to certain aspects of the religion, excluding the rest—and we are reduced to imagining what that mysterious "rest" may be. To return to Gebeleïzis, and taking into consideration the fate of gods of the sky and of storm, we can suggest various hypotheses to explain the silence of our sources. First, it is possible that Gebeleïzis underwent the process well known in the history of religions: from a celestial god of the type of Dyaus, he may have become a storm god and, consequently, also a god of fertility, like Zeus or Ba'al. For the fact is that, with very few exceptions, a celestial god becomes a *deus otiosus,* and ends by vanishing from the cult, if he is not "reactualized" by being transformed into a storm god, which would appear to have been the case with Gebeleïzis. But since storm gods play a considerable role both among the Indo-Europeans and in the religions of Asia Minor and the Mediterranean region, it is not necessary to suppose that Gebeleïzis disappeared. We can imagine either his coalescence with another divinity, or his survival under another name. The fact that the mythological folklore of the prophet Elijah contains a number of elements proper to a storm god at least proves that Gebeleïzis was still active when Dacia was converted to Christianity, whatever his name may have been at that period.

Another tenable hypothesis is that, at least from a certain time on, a religious syncretism encouraged by the high priest and the sacerdotal class ended by confusing Gebeleïzis with Zalmoxis. However this may be, it is important to remember that the Dacian sanctuaries of Sarmizegetuza and Coteşti had no roofs, and that the very large round sanctuary of Sarmizegetuza was dominated

by celestial symbolism; in addition, the admirable "stone sun" from the sacred enclosure of Sarmizegetuza confirms the urano-solar character of the Geto-Dacian religion in Roman times.[103] We do not know what god, or gods, was worshiped in these sanctuaries, but since the classic authors mention only Zalmoxis we may conclude that, in the Roman period, a Zalmoxis-Gebeleïzis syncretism existed. If, as we think, Gebeleïzis represents the ancient celestial god of the Geto-Dacians, patron of the aristocratic and military class, the *tarabostes* (whose name includes the element *-bostes,* from the Indo-European root **bhô-s,* "shining, luminous"),[104] and if, again, Zalmoxis was the "God of the Mysteries," the master of initiation, he who bestows immortality, syncretism between these two gods was the work of the sacerdotal class.

ZALMOXIS AND THE HEALER-PRIESTS

We possess only a very few documents concerning the Geto-Dacian healer-magicians, but Plato already mentions them, and his testimony is important. After relating his meeting with one of the physicians of the "Thracian king Zalmoxis who are said to be able even to give immortality," Socrates goes on: the Thracian physician told him what he had learned about "our king, who is also a god"; Zalmoxis, he said, teaches that "as you ought not to attempt to cure the eyes without the head, or the head without the body, so neither ought you to attempt to cure the body without the soul." And this is the reason, the Thracian healer added, why "the cure of many diseases is unknown to the physicians of Hellas, because they disregard the whole" (*Charmides* 156 d). Through the literary stereotype that the "wisdom of the barbarians" is superior to the science of the Greeks, we discern a doctrine analogous to Hippo-

103. C. D. Daicoviciu, "Le problème de l'état et de la culture des Daces à la lumière des nouvelles recherches" (in *Nouvelles Études d'Histoire, présentées au X^e Congrès des sciences historiques* [Bucharest, 1955], pp. 121–37), pp. 126 ff.; Hadrian Daicoviciu, "Il Tempio-Calendario dacico de Sarmizegetusa" (*Dacia,* N. Sr. 4 [Bucharest, 1960]: 231–54); Daicoviciu, *Dacii* (Bucharest, 1968), pp. 194 ff., 210 ff.

104. Walde-Pokorny, 2: 122; Russu, *Limba traco-dacilor,* p. 96.

cratic integralism.[105] We must not forget that the reputation of the Geto-Dacian physicians was real and that it survived for centuries.[106]

But Plato furnishes some details of great value: the importance accorded to the "soul" by Zalmoxis, who is at once god, king, and healer; the functional relationship between health preserved by a "total method," in which the soul plays the decisive part, and the acquisition of immortality. Insofar as these details, even through a certain fictionalization, reflect genuine information regarding the "wisdom of the Getae," they confirm and complete Herodotus' testimony: in short, Zalmoxis is the healer-god who is concerned above all with the human "soul" and its destiny.

Plato introduces this new element: Zalmoxis is at once god and king. The tradition is documented elsewhere among the Thracians: Rhesus, king and priest, was worshiped as a god by the initiates into his mysteries.[107] Here we can discern three principal expressions of a religious system whose roots probably go back to

105. It is impossible to draw any conclusions concerning the possible relations between Hippocrates and Thracian traditions. Though the ancient biographers agree that Hippocrates lived for a time in northern Thrace, and certain modern authors observe that Books 1 and 3 of the *Epidemics* appear to have been written in a "Thracian Greek," there is not a single reference to Thracian traditions in the Hippocratic *corpus;* cf. G. Brătescu, *Hipocratismul de-a lungul secolelor* (Bucharest, 1968), pp. 55 ff.

106. Indeed, there was a certain tradition of Zalmoxis *iatros* (cf. Tomaschek, "Die alten Thraker," 2: 1: 64 ff.), and, as Pârvan points out (*Getica*, p. 145), it is perhaps not by chance that Dioscorides, a Greek physician of the first century A.D., took the trouble to collect and record a great number of Daco-Getic names of medicinal plants (cf. Tomaschek, "Die alten Thraker," pp. 22 ff.; the more recent studies of Dioscorides are discussed by Russu, *Limba traco-dacilor*, pp. 43–47). On the medical knowledge and techniques of the Geto-Dacians see also I. H. Crişan, "O trusă medicală descoperită la Grădiştea Muncelului" (in *Istoria Medicinii. Studii şi Cercetări* [Bucharest, 1957], pp. 45–56).

107. The famous lines in which the Muse announces the destiny of her son in Euripides' *Rhesus* (970–73) have been interpreted by some authors as referring to Zalmoxis; cf. A. D. Nock, "The End of the *Rhesus*" (*The Classical Review* 40 [1926]: 184–86); see also Ivan M. Linforth, *The Arts of Orpheus* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1941), pp. 60 ff.; Jack Lindsay, *The Clashing Rocks*, p. 375.

the prehistory of the Indo-Europeans: (1) identification, homologation, or confusion among god, king, and high priest; (2) the tendency to "deify" kings; (3) the importance of the high priest, whose authority, theoretically less than that of the king, sometimes proves to be greater. We have a classic example of the first category in Strabo's presentation of the religious history of the Dacians (see below, p. 58). As for the "deification" of kings, the problem is too complex to enter into here.[108] It will suffice to cite a few Celtic parallels. According to Tacitus (*Hist.* 5. c. 61), Mariccus, king of the Boii, assumed the appellative *deus,* just like Conchobar, king of Ulster, who had the title *dia talmaide.* Examples of Celtic kings bearing the names of gods are also documented.[109] Finally, the importance of the high priest and his political and social role in respect to the king seem to be characteristic of the Thraco-Phrygians[110] and the Celts (among whom the druid was sometimes considered superior to the king),[111] but the institution is also documented in archaic Greece,[112] and it certainly existed in the protohistory of the Indo-Europeans.[113]

ZALMOXIS AND DECAENEUS

These relations among god, king, and high priest are set forth at length by Strabo, who, as we know, follows Posidonius. Accord-

108. See the account of progress in the field in *La Regalità Sacra* (VIII[e] Congrès International d'Histoire des Religions, Leiden, 1959).

109. Jan de Vries, *La religion des Celtes,* trans. L. Jospin (Paris, 1963), pp. 245 ff. On the Getic "king" Zalmodegikos, who in the third century B.C. had relations with the Greek colony of Histria, cf. D. M. Pippidi, *Contribuţii la istoria veche a României* (Bucharest, 1967), pp. 172 ff. (French summary pp. 554–55).

110. Cf. R. Hennig, *Symbolae ad Asiae Minoris reges-sacerdotes* (1893); Charles Picard, *Ephèse et Claros* (Paris, 1922), pp. 274 ff. On Vologaesus (Bulogaises), high priest and king of the Bessi, see Dio Cassius 54. 34. 5.

111. De Vries, *La religion des Celtes,* pp. 217, 244.

112. Cf. Ingrid Löffler, *Die Melampodie. Versuch einer Rekonstruktion des Inhalts* (Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie, Heft 7, Meisenheim am Glan, 1963).

113. See the studies of Georges Dumézil, especially *Mitra-Varuna* (2d ed., Paris, 1948), and *L'idéologie tripartie des Indo-Européens* (Brussels, 1958).

equally probable that the cult of Zalmoxis had itself undergone certain transformations in the course of the preceding four centuries. What seems to have impressed Strabo is the exceptional position and power of the high priest, at once a prophet and associated with the throne, living in an inaccessible solitude at the summit of the sacred mountain, and deified. For Strabo, another detail is equally important: that Zalmoxis in his day—just like the recently notorious Decaeneus—had succeeded in such a prodigious career almost entirely because of his astronomical knowledge and prophetic powers. The insistence on a knowledge of the celestial bodies may reflect authentic information. For the temples of Sarmizegetuza and Costeşti, whose urano-solar symbolism is obvious, appear also to have a calendrical function.[115] And we shall later analyze the information supplied by Jordanes in regard to the astronomical knowledge of the Dacian priests (see p. 65). As for the "sacred mountain," Kogaionon, its name, documented only in Strabo, is suspect and does not seem to belong to the Thraco-Dacian vocabulary.[116] But there is no plausible reason to doubt the authenticity of the information concerning the high priest's place of residence. In the immense Carpatho-Danubian and Balkan area, as well as elsewhere (Asia Minor, Iran, India, etc.), from the most ancient times down to the beginning of our century, mountain summits and caves have been the favorite retreat of ascetics, monks, and contemplatives of every description.

In the new stage of the Dacian religion that Strabo (or Posidonius) presents, the character of Zalmoxis proves to have changed markedly. First, there is the identification between *the god* Zalmoxis and his *high priest,* who ends by being deified under the same name. This aspect of the cult of Zalmoxis is unknown to Herodotus. This does not necessarily mean that it is a recent innovation; for, as we have seen (p. 57), the importance of the high priest is characteristic of the Thraco-Phrygians. It is, however, possible that we here have either a Celtic influence or a process that may

115. See the references cited in n. 103, especially H. Daicoviciu, "Il Tempio-Calendario dacico."

116. Cf. Russu, "Religia Geto-Dacilor," p. 94 n. Cf. ibid., pp. 93 ff., on some recent hypotheses regarding the location of Kogaionon.

have taken place during the preceding two or three centuries, when the high priest of Zalmoxis had acquired enough prestige to be considered the representative of the god and, finally, a god himself.

But—even more strikingly—we do not find in Strabo-Posidonius the slightest reference to a cult of the same structure as the Mysteries, such as Herodotus described. Zalmoxis no longer appears as "the slave of Pythagoras" who reveals the doctrine of the immortality of the soul to the Geto-Dacians, but as "the slave of Pythagoras" who learns the art of reading the future in the course of the heavenly bodies and, returned to his country, becomes the king's right hand, high priest, and, while still alive, ends by being deified. For Strabo, the best proof of the continuity between Zalmoxis, the slave of Pythagoras, and Decaeneus lies in the vegetarianism of the Daco-Getae, a detail unknown to Herodotus. In short, for Strabo the cult of Zalmoxis is dominated by a high priest who lives alone at the top of a mountain, at the same time being associated with the king as his principal counselor; and this cult is "Pythagorean" because it forbids flesh food.

Certainly Strabo did not set out to repeat the celebrated story of Zalmoxis, which everyone who could read in his time knew from Herodotus; his intention was to present what other and more recent sources furnished that was new. Most probably the new information especially concerned the role and the exalted position of the high priest, and the "Pythagorean" type of asceticism practiced by the Dacians. We do not know to what extent the initiatory and eschatological structure of Zalmoxis' "mystery," as it can be discerned in Herodotus' account, survived in Strabo's day. But there can be no doubt that it is among the "specialists in the sacred" and in the ambience of the high priest that we must look for data from which we can deduce the esoteric aspects of the cult.

SOLITARIES AND SAGES

We have already (above, p. 42) touched upon what Strabo has to say about the *theosebeis* and the *kapnobatai* of the Mysians, who inhabited the right bank of the Danube. These ascetics and contemplatives were vegetarians and lived on honey, milk, and cheese. Strabo adds that among the Thracians too there are pious solitaries

who live apart from women and are known as *ktistai.* They are revered because they consecrate themselves to the gods and live "freed from every fear" (7. 3. 3). According to Flavius Josephus (*Jewish Antiquities* 18. 2), among the Dacians these ascetics and contemplatives were called *pleistoi,* a word for which Scaliger proposed the reading *polistai.*

These names have given rise to controversies. Pârvan saw in *ktistai* the Greek term *ktistes,* "founder," and, adopting Scaliger's reading, he translated *polistai* as "founders of cities."[117] The eminent archeologist affirmed that the first term, *ktistai,* was used by the Getae on the right bank of the Danube, while those on the left bank and the Dacians used the term *polistai.*[118] This may be true, but as E. Lozovan observes, Strabo refers expressly to the Thracians and Flavius Josephus to the Dacians.[119] In any case, it is certain that the terms do not mean "founders" or "founders of cities." Jean Gagé and Lozovan have shown that Scaliger's reading, *polistai,* is highly improbable.[120] Gagé has advanced a daring interpretation of the word *pleistoi.* Following Tomaschek and Kazarow, he has related the *pleistoi* with the Thracian god *Pleistoros* (Herodotus 9. 119), but he has added to the documentation a dedication, dating from the reign of Hadrian, to Diana Plestrensis, and some South Danubian toponyms (among others, *Pliska* in southern Dobrudja), to reconstruct a root **pleisk* (cf. Romanian *plisc,* "beak of a bird"). The reconstruction has been criticized by F. Altheim and Lozovan. The latter suggests an Indo-European root **pleus,* with its Thracian form **pleisk,* from which both Romanian *plisc* and **pleiskoi, pleistoi,* and *pileati* ("those whose head covering is the *pilos*") would derive.[121] "The *Pleistoi* now appear to us with their faces bared, definitively cleared of the suspicion that they are no more than a fanciful reading. Celibates and vegetarians, wearing the *pilos* on their heads like the Dacian noblemen, comparing them to the Essenes is not fortuitous."[122] As for *ktistai,* D. Dečev derives it from the Indo-European **sqei-d,* "to separate," whence Thracian **skistai,* "those who live apart, celibates."[123]

What is worth retaining from all this is the existence of one or more classes of "specialists in the sacred," characterized by a more or less monastic life, since they were celibates, vegetarians, and lived in solitude. Origen reports a legend according to which Zalmoxis propagated the Pythagorean doctrine among the Celts,[124] which once again proves the importance accorded, even in late antiquity, to the tradition that defined the religion of Zalmoxis by belief in the immortality of the soul. Certain modern authors have drawn a comparison with the druidism of the Thracian and

117. Pârvan, *Getica,* p. 160, followed by Coman, "Zalmoxis," p. 90; *contra,* Russu, "Religia Geto-Dacilor," p. 124.

118. Pârvan, *Getica,* pp. 160, 739; Pârvan, *Dacia,* p. 80.

119. Eugène Lozovan, "Les *Pleistoi:* des Carpathes à Qumran" (*Acta Philosophica et Theologica* 2 [Rome, 1964]: 183–89), p. 185 n; Lozovan, "Dacia Sacra" (*History of Religions* 7 [1968]: 209–43), p. 221, n. 51.

120. J. Gagé, "Du culte thrace de Pleistonus à la secte dace des 'Pleistoï.' À propos d'une dédicace épigraphique à Diana Plestrensis" (*Noul Album Macedo-Român* [Freiburg i. Br., 1959] pp. 15–26), p. 16; E. Lozovan, "Les *Pleistoi,*" p. 184; Lozovan, "Dacia Sacra," p. 221.

121. On the felt cap—*pilos*—among the Dacians, the Goths, and the Iranians see F. Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen* 1 (Berlin, 1959): 325–29; cf. also Dumézil, *Mythe et Epopée* 1 (Paris, 1968): 444 ff., on the "wearers of felt" among the Scythians. The symbolism and mythology of felt have been brilliantly presented by Leonardo Olschki, *The Myth of Felt* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1949).

122. E. Lozovan, "Les *Pleistoi* daces—moines abstinents?" (*Orpheus* 11 [1964]: 141–47), p. 146.

123. D. Dečev, "Charakteristik der thrakischen Sprache" (*Linguistique Balkanique* 2 [Sofia, 1960]: 148–212), p. 169; cf. Lozovan, "Les *Pleistoi,*" p. 185, n. 6; Lozovan, "Dacia Sacra," p. 221, n. 51. A. Dupont-Sommer has recently proposed that *Dakon* ("the Dacians") in Josephus' text be read as a corruption of *sadok,* or rather of *saddoukaion* ("Sadducees"); cf. "On a passage of Josephus relating to the Essenes" (*Journal of Semitic Studies* 1 [1956]: 361–66) and *Les écrits esséniens découverts près de la Mer Morte* (Paris, 1959), p. 47. Nor is he the first author to have wondered what the Dacians were doing in Flavius Josephus' text. But Lozovan rightly remarks that Josephus wrote his *Jewish Antiquities* between 93 and 94, soon after Domitian's Dacian campaign, when the Dacians were very much "in the news"; cf. Lozovan, "Les *Pleistoi,*" pp. 187 ff., and "Dacia Sacra," pp. 223 ff.

124. Hippolytos, *Philosophumena* 2. 25.

Geto-Dacian confraternities.[125] It is especially the importance of the high priest, the belief in immortality, and the initiatory type of sacred science characteristic of the druids that suggest Dacian parallels. Then too, we must be prepared to suppose certain Celtic influences, for Celtic peoples inhabited the western parts of Dacia for some time.[126] So it is probable that in Strabo's day the "Mystery" tradition of the cult of Zalmoxis survived among the Geto-Dacian hermits and other strict practitioners of religion, by whatever names they may have been known. It is equally probable that these solitary ascetics were in some way under the control of the high priest.

The importance of the high priest is strongly emphasized by Jordanes, who, though he wrote in the sixth century, used earlier sources, especially Cassiodorus, who, in turn, based himself on Dio Chrysostom (whom Jordanes himself also cites, *Getica* 5. 40) and other authors. Jordanes believed that he was writing the history of his ancestors, the Goths, and we shall return to this confusion between the names "Getae" and "Gothi." Jordanes affirms that the Dacians had had a king, Zalmoxis, "greatly learned in philosophy," and before him another sage, Zeuta, who was succeeded by Dicineus (*Getica* 5. 40). According to Jordanes (11. 67–68), Dicineus became the collaborator with king Boruista when Sulla reigned over the Romans, that is, about 80 B.C.—and this seems to be correct. As Jordanes presents it, Decaeneus' activity is both cultural and religious. On the one hand, he exhibits the characteristics of a civilizing hero (as such a figure was imagined in late antiquity); on the other, he acts as a reformer (apparently as a creator) of religious institutions.

Jordanes describes Decaeneus' civilizing work in extravagant terms: When he saw that the Goths (= Getae) "obeyed him in everything and were endowed with natural intelligence, he taught

125. H. Hubert, *Les Celtes depuis l'époque de la Tène et la Civilisation celtique* (Paris, 1932), p. 283; Jean Coman, "Décénée" (*Zalmoxis* 3 [1943]: 103–60), pp. 148 ff.

126. Cf. Pârvan, *Getica,* pp. 461 ff.; Pârvan, *Dacia. Civilizaţiile antice din ţările Carpato-danubiene* (4th ed.; Bucharest, 1967), pp. 103 ff., 183 ff.; H. Daicoviciu, *Dacii,* pp. 61 ff.

them almost the whole of philosophy, for he was a famous master of that subject. Thus, by teaching them morality, he restrained their barbaric customs; by instructing them in physics, he persuaded them to live in conformity with nature, under the rule of their own laws, [laws] that they possess in written form down to this day and that they call *belagines.* He taught them logic and succeeded in making them skilled in reasoning and superior to other peoples; he initiated them into practical knowledge and so persuaded them to practice good works. By demonstrating theoretical knowledge to them, he taught them to observe the twelve signs [of the zodiac] and the courses of the planets that traverse them, and the whole of astronomy. He explained to them how the disc of the moon waxes and wanes, and showed them how the fiery globe of the sun exceeds our terrestrial planet in size. He explained to them the names of the 346 stars and also through what signs they glide through the celestial vault, from their rising to their setting. Consider, I beg you, what a pleasure it was for these brave men to be instructed in philosophic doctrines when, for a short time, they were not engaged in war! One could be seen studying the position of the heavens, another examining the nature of herbs and shrubs; here one followed the growth and decline of the moon, while another looked at the labors of the sun and observed how those celestial bodies that hasten toward the east are turned and brought back by the rotation of the heavens. When they [the Getae] learned the reason [for all these things], they were at rest. By teaching them, out of his knowledge, these and other things, Dicineus acquired a marvelous reputation among them, so that he reigned not only over the common men but also over their kings" (11. 69–71).

This fabulous picture is certainly more than a rhetorical exercise. Compiling his sources uncritically, Jordanes pursued his principal purpose: the glorification of his "ancestors," the Getae. Dio, one of his sources, affirmed that the Getae were nearly as civilized and "learned" as the Greeks. Certainly, this notion was substantiated by a venerable tradition: Zalmoxis as the disciple of Pythagoras. But Strabo had already emphasized the astronomic knowledge of the high priest, and Jordanes repeats and amplifies the information, which, as we have seen, is also confirmed by

the Dacian temples and their solar and calendrical symbolism. It is true that Jordanes presents Decaeneus as a civilizer of the whole nation; despite the "civilizing hero" stereotype that dominates his romantic biography, it is still possible that the sources he used for his compilation registered the surprising progress made in Dacia between the time of Boerebista and Decaeneus and that of Decebalus. It is possible to discern in Decaeneus' encyclopedic teaching, enthusiastically described by Jordanes, the cultural advance of the Dacians after the political unification brought about by Boerebista and its apogee during the reign of Decebalus.[127]

Jordanes also makes Dicineus responsible for the religious organization of the Getae. He chose some of the noblest and wisest, "and he taught them theology, ordering them to worship certain divinities and certain sacred places. To the priests whom he consecrated he gave the name *pilleati* ["those with caps"], I believe because, during the sacrifices they offered, they had their heads covered by a tiara, which we also call *pilleos*. But he decreed that the rest of the people be called *capillati* ("the long-haired"), a name that the Goths [= Getae] accepted and valued to the highest degree, and which they have kept down to this day in their songs" (11. 72).

We have no reason whatever to believe that the organization of the sacerdotal class was the work of Decaeneus, or that the names *pilleati* and *capillati* were his invention. Very probably the high priest was simply the reformer of an institution that already existed, but that must have been organized and strengthened when the Dacian state attained the power and prestige we know it to have had under Boerebista.

In any case, the last compiler who wrote on Dacian religion dwells almost exclusively on the activity of Decaeneus, high priest and civilizing hero, and puts Zalmoxis among his successors. Here we have the secularized and strongly "historicized" version of a *deus otiosus*. As a god, Zalmoxis disappears. After Jordanes the few

127. Cf. Daicoviciu, *Dacii*, p. 209, and the references cited above in nn. 106 and 114. Jordanes' sources have been analyzed by Mommsen, *Mon. Germ. Hist.* auct. ant. 5, 1, pp. xxxi ff. See also F. Altheim, "Waldleute und Feldleute" (*Paideuma* 5: 424–30).

sources that still mention Zalmoxis always present him, together with Decaeneus, as among the philosophers who civilized the Goths in the fabulous country of their ancestors, Dacia.

DACIA CAPTA

But the transformation of Zalmoxis into a civilizing hero and a philosopher is solely the work of foreign authors: we have no proof that the same process took place among the Geto-Dacians. In short, from Herodotus to Jordanes, all that we know about Zalmoxis and the religion of the Dacians we owe entirely to the accounts and commentaries of foreign writers. When we try to discern, through the medium of their interpretations, what the religion of Zalmoxis originally was and in what direction it developed, we come to the following conclusion: the mystagogic character of Zalmoxis and his famous doctrine of immortality, which had so greatly impressed the Greeks,[128] were supplemented by the growing interest in medicine, astronomy, mysticism, and "magic." And in fact a comparable process can be discerned in other Mystery religions during the period of Greco-Oriental syncretism.

We do not know what happened to Zalmoxis and his cult after Dacia became a Roman province (A.D. 106). One thing is certain: Romanization was more rapid and more radical in urban milieux. It is in the cities that names were changed on a large scale, and there too that the syncretistic cults flourished.[129] But, as everywhere else in the provinces of the Roman empire, the autochthonous religious realities, more or less transformed, survived not only Romanization but also the process of Christianization. We have a quantity of proofs that the "pagan"—that is, Geto-Dacian and Daco-Roman—heritage survived among the Romanians, and we shall have occasion to point them out in all the other chapters of this book. But their number is certainly larger; we need only think of the cult of the dead and funerary mythology, of agri-

128. His doctrine of immortality and the episode that made him "the slave of Pythagoras" were no doubt the two factors that led the ancient authors to continue to give Zalmoxis a place in their writings.

129. We shall return to the syncretistic cults of Dacia in a separate study. The bibliography is extensive.

cultural rites, seasonal customs, magical beliefs, and so on, which, as is well known, persist for many millennia.

An example of continuity to which even the language bears witness is that of the goddess Diana. Pârvan[130] was of the opinion that the Daco-Roman Diana (*Diana sancta, potentissima*) was the same divinity as the Artemis-Bendis of the Thracians (Herodotus 4. 33). The equivalence, probable though it may be, has not yet been proved,[131] but there can be no doubt that an aboriginal goddess, whether syncretized or not, is hidden under the Roman name of Diana. Now the cult of this goddess survived after the Romanization of Dacia, and the name *Diana* is found in the Romanian word *zâna* ("fairy"). The *Diana sancta* of Sarmizegetuza[132] became *Sânziana* (<*San(cta) Diana*), a central figure in Romanian folklore.[133] The religious and linguistic continuity was assured above all by the fact that the process of transformation took place in a rural (hence folk) milieu of fields and forests.

We cannot expect a similar process in the case of Zalmoxis, for from the beginning his cult also flourished among educated people and in proto-urban milieux. On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine that the principal god of the Geto-Dacians, the only one who interested the Greeks and, later, the elites of the Hellenistic and Roman worlds, and whom writers continued to mention down to the end of antiquity, should have been the only one to disappear without a trace and to be completely forgotten after Dacia was made into a Roman province. Are we to seek him in one of the syncretistic Romanized divinities?[134]

130. Cf. Pârvan, *Getica*, p. 163.

131. See E. Lozovan, "Dacia Sacra," p. 230, with n. 105 (bibliography).

132. Lozovan, "Dacia Sacra," p. 230 and n. 109, citing H. Daicoviciu, "Diana de la Sarmizegetusa, Ulpia Traiana" (*Omagiu lui C. Daicoviciu;* Bucharest, 1960), pp. 131–39.

133. The *dianatici*, "the possessed by Diana," gave in Romanian *zănateci*, "fools, madmen"; V. Pârvan, *Contribuţii epigrafice la istoria creştinismului daco-roman* (Bucharest, 1911), p. 120; E. Lozovan, "Dacia Sacra," p. 231.

134. A. Bodor, "Der Liber- und Libera-Kult. Ein Beitrag zur Fortdauer der Bodenständigen Bevölkerung im Römerzeitlichen Dazien" (*Dacia,*

Let us not forget that the distinctive characteristics of the cult of Zalmoxis were those of an eschatological Mystery religion: according to Herodotus, Zalmoxis had revealed the possibility of obtaining immortality by an initiation that included a *descensus ad inferos* and an epiphany, a ritual "death" followed by a "rebirth." So we may think that the beliefs concerning Zalmoxis were absorbed, and radically transformed, by Christianity. It is difficult to conceive that a religious complex centered on the hope of obtaining immortality after the example—and through the mediation—of a god whose structure is mystagogic could have been ignored by the Christian missionaries. Every aspect of the religion of Zalmoxis—eschatology, initiation, "Pythagoreanism," asceticism, mystical erudition (astrology, healing, theurgy, etc.)—encouraged a comparison with Christianity. The best and the simplest explanation for the disappearance of Zalmoxis and his cult should perhaps be sought in the very early Christianization of Dacia (from before A.D. 270).[135] Unfortunately, we have little information concerning the most archaic phases of Christianity in Dacia;[136] so we do not know if certain aspects of the religion of Zalmoxis survived, in a new form, during the first Christian centuries.

But it would be fruitless to look for possible survivals of Zalmoxis in Romanian folklore, for the simple reason that his cult was not specifically rural in structure, and above all because, more than any of the other pagan divinities, he lent himself to an almost total Christianization.

N. S. 7 [1963]: 211–39), holds that the cult of the pair Liber-Libera is of Dacian origin; he refers to the article in which Suidas mentions a goddess Zalmoxis; cf. above, n. 65. See also N. Gostar, "Cultele autohtone în Dacia romana" (*Anuarul Institutului de Istorie antică* 2 [1965]: 237–54).

135. This does not mean, as certain Romanian authors maintain, that Zalmoxis had anticipated, or prepared the way for, Christianity.

136. See the present progress in studies in E. Lozovan, "Aux origines du christianisme daco-scythique" (in Altheim-Stiehl, *Geschichte der Hunnen* 4 [Berlin, 1962]: 146–65); D. M. Pippidi, "In jurul izvoarelor literare ale creştinismului daco-roman" (in *Contribuţii la istoria veche a României*, pp. 481–96); Pippidi, "Niceta din Remesiana şi originile creştinismului daco-roman" (ibid., pp. 497–516; cf. p. 516, n. 72, bibliography).

THE METAMORPHOSES OF ZALMOXIS

The fate of Zalmoxis is certainly paradoxical. Having disappeared among the Daco-Romans, he survived far from his native country, in the traditions of the Goths, and hence in the strongly mythologized historiographic erudition of the West. He survived precisely because he in some sort symbolized the genius of the Geto-Dacians. And it is by reconstructing the mythological history of the Geto-Dacians in the consciousness of the Western world, from the barbarian invasions to the end of the Middle Ages, that we understand why Alfonso the Wise, in his *Cronica general,* so fervently discussed *Zalmoxen, Boruista,* and his counselor *Dicineo.*

To begin with, we must bear in mind the image of the Geto-Dacians as it had become more well defined and established from the time of Herodotus, especially during the last centuries of antiquity. In contrast to other "barbarians," they were praised for their moral qualities and their heroism, for their nobility and their simple way of life. But on the other hand, especially because they were confused with the Scythians, the Geto-Dacians are presented as nothing short of savages—hairy (*hirsuti*), unshorn (*intonsi*), skin-clad (*pelliti*), and so on.

The tradition of the heroism of the Geto-Dacians—"the bravest of all Thracians," as Herodotus termed them—survived long after the Dacian state disappeared. Ovid recalled "the savage Getae who do not fear the power of Rome" (*Ex Ponto* 1. 2. 81–82) and described them as "veritable images of Mars" (*Tristia* 5. 7. 17). For Vergil, the country of the Getae was "the martial land of Rhesus" (*Georg.* 4. 462); it was Mars (Pater Gradivus) who reigned over their fields (*Aeneid* 3. 35). At the beginning of the second century of our era Dio Chrysostom was still repeating that the Getae were "the most warlike of all the barbarians." And Lucian wrote, "Whenever I looked at the country of the Getae, I saw them fighting." In the fifth century Sidonius Apollinaris stated that the Getae (whom he called "Thracians") were invulnerable.[137] As for Jordanes, he had elaborated a whole mythology on the exceptional heroism of his

137. Dio Chrysostom *Discourse* 36. 4; Lucian *Icaromenippus* 16; Sidonius 2. *Panegyric on Anthemius* 34–36, texts cited by Jane Acomb Leake, *The Geats of Beowulf* (Madison, 1967), pp. 18, 42.

"ancestors": the Getae (= Goths) had conquered the Greeks during the Trojan War, and later had triumphed over Cyrus and Darius; though numbering 700,000 men, Xerxes' army did not dare to face the Getae.[138] Isidore of Seville (seventh century), who also identified the Goths with the Getae, wrote in his *Historia Gothorum* that even Rome, victorious over all peoples, "bore the yoke of captivity imposed upon her."[139]

Naturally enough, after having been identified with the Amazons, the Getae were assimilated to the Giants.[140] Ovid compared them to the descendants of the Giants, the Laestrygones and the Cyclopes (*Ex Ponto* 4. 10. 21–24). For their part, the Christian writers very soon homologized the Geto-Goths with Gog and Magog.[141] Part of this ethnic mythology developed in consequence of the confusion between Getae and Goths. Julian the Apostate is probably the first to have used the term "Getae" as equivalent to "Goths," which does not mean that he confused the two peoples, for he mentions a victory of the former over the latter and he also refers to the Dacians.[142] In the fourth century Prudentius con-

138. *Getica* 9: 60; 10: 61–64. It is again Jordanes who relates that the army of Philip of Macedon was scattered by the Getic priests, and that not even Julius Caesar was able to conquer a people of such prodigious courage (10–11: 65–68).

139. *Quibus tant extitit magnitudo bellorum et tam excellens gloriosae victoriae virtus, ut Roma ipsa victrix omnium populorum subacta captivitatis iugo Geticis triumphis adcederet et domina cunctarum, gentium illis ut famula deserviret* (Isidore, *Historia Gothorum,* 67–68; text quoted by Leake, *The Geats of Beowulf,* p. 44).

140. Cf. the passages from Statius (first century after Christ) and Dio Cassius assembled by Leake, *The Geats of Beowulf,* pp. 19–20. According to Dio, cited by Jordanes (11: 58–59), Telephus, a king of the Getae, was the son of Hercules and equaled his father in stature and strength.

141. See the passages from Saint Jerome, Saint Ambrose, and Isidore quoted by Leake, *The Geats of Beowulf,* pp. 25, 35–37; cf. ibid., pp. 38 ff., the references to the Jewish sources and to the theme of Gog and Magog in the Alexander romances. Isidore considered the Getae-Goths the descendants of Gog and Magog (cf. ibid., pp. 38, 158, n. 39).

142. *Panegyric in Honor of Constantine,* 9 D; *De Caesaribus,* 311 C, 320 D, 327 D; cf. Leake, *The Geats of Beowulf,* p. 25. Ausonius uses the same formula at nearly the same time; cf. Leake, ibid.

tinues the equivalence, and the formula becomes more and more popular, though the ethnic identity of the Getae is not forgotten.[143] But it is with Claudian (beginning of the fifth century) that the tradition of calling the Goths "Getae" becomes established. His contemporary Orosius writes: "But those who are today the Goths were formerly the Getae" (*modo autem Getae illi qui et nunc Gothi*), and Rutilius Claudius Namatianus, Prosper of Aquitaine, and a number of other writers adopt the homologation.[144] Cassiodorus (487–583), Jordanes' principal source, only follows a tradition already generally accepted. In his turn, Jordanes uses the term "Getae" when he discusses ancient history and, with a few exceptions (60. 308, 315, 316), uses "Gothi" when he refers to more recent events.

The glorious portrait of the Goths, as Jordanes and Isidore present it, and as it is found again later, during the Middle Ages, in the romances centered around Theodoric, coexists with the other, negative image derived from the confusion between Getae (= Goths) and Scythians. The two representations continue through the Middle Ages, as is proved by Jane Leake's exhaustive study.[145] The stereotyped epithets—"skin-clad," "shaggy," "hairy"—pass from the Getae and the Scythians to the Goths (Leake, *The Geats*, p. 49). In medieval geography the Germanic North is presented as the *Scythia* of the classic authors: hence the Getae and their neighbors are moved northward to that region (ibid., pp. 54–55). In his *Cosmographia* Aethicus Ister moves even the Black Sea, the Caucasus, and the Caspian Sea into the North (p. 57). At the beginning of the Middle Ages the terms "Gothia" and "Getia" are applied to Denmark and the Jutland Peninsula, and in medieval maps Denmark is called "Dacia" or "Gothia," for during the Middle Ages "Daci" was synonomous with "Dani." Adam of Bremen mingles

143. On the three occasions on which Servius, in his commentary on Vergil, glosses the term *getae*, he explains it correctly twice, but in reference to a passage in the *Georgics* (4. 462), he states that the Getae were Goths; cf. Leake, *The Geats of Beowulf*, p. 25.

144. The references in Leake, ibid., pp. 25–26, 155–56.

145. Ibid., pp. 72 ff., 83 ff.

Goths and Getae, Danes and Dacians, and calls them all Hyperboreans.[146]

In his chronicle of the Dukes of Normandy, Guillaume de Jumièges (eleventh century) recounts their fabulous history and speaks of "Dacia, also called Denmark" (*Dacia, quae et Danamarcha*), a country inhabited by the Goths, who had "many kings generously endowed with the learning of admirable philosophies, namely, Zeuta and Dichineus, as well as Zalmoxis and several others."[147] But, as Alexandre Busuioceanu has shown,[148] it is above all in Spain that this tradition was assimilated, and ended by becoming an integral part of the national culture. Isidore, himself of Gothic origin, had founded Iberian historiography on the famous identification of Getae and Goths. Isidore, who did not know Jordanes, in his eulogy of Spain spoke of the country "in which the glorious fecundity of the Getic people flourished" (*Geticae gentis gloriosa fecunditas*). And when, in the thirteenth century, Jordanes begins to be read in Spain, the "Dacians" enter the history and genealogy of the Spanish people through the *Historia Gothica* of Bishop Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada and through the *Cronica General* of King Alfonso the Wise. What Alfonso writes about the distant ancestral lands of *Daçia* or *Goçia, Zalmoxen*, "of whom the historians tell that

146. See the extensive documentation given by Leake, ibid., pp. 72 ff., 79. Sweden, Denmark, and Norway are combined into a *Scythia*, p. 79. Cf. p. 92, the identification Denmark-*Dacia* in the *Ymago mundi*.

147. ". . . *sistens reges habuit multos mirare philosophiae eruditione vehementer imbutos, Zeutan scilicet atque Dichineum, necnon Zalmoxen aliosque plures*" (*Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, 1, 2–3, ed. Jean Marx, 1914, quoted by Leake, *The Geats of Beowulf*, p. 80). It is very probable that the *Geatas* of Beowulf are the *Getae*, whom the Germans considered their ethnic ancestors (ibid., pp. 98–133). On the homologation Getae-Goths in the traditions of the Transylvanian Saxons cf. Karl Kurt Klein, "Die Goten-Geten-Daken-Sachsengleichung in der Sprachentwicklung der Deutschen Siebenbürgens" (*Südost-Forschungen* 11 [1946–1956]: 84–154). On the historical relations between the Scandinavians and the Romanians see E. Lozovan, "De la mer Baltique à la mer Noire" (in F. Altheim-R. Stiehl, *Die Araber in der alten Welt* 2 [Berlin, 1965]: 524–54).

148. Alexandre Busuioceanu, "Utopia getică" (*Destin*, No. 8–9 [Madrid, May 1954]: 99–114).

he was marvelously learned in philosophy,"[149] King *Boruista* and his counselor *Dicineo* derives directly from Jordanes.[150] But this time there is far more than mere compilation. Alexandre Busuioceanu has convincingly shown the role of this historicized mythology in the *Reconquista*, and, more generally, in the formation of the historiographic consciousness of the Spanish people.[151]

Indeed, it is significant that the name of Trajan, the emperor of pure Iberian stock, is not found in the *Cronica General* in the chapter devoted to the history of Dacia, whereas Decebalus (Dorpaneo) figures in it. For Alfonso, Trajan had his chapter in the history of Rome, and it is there that we find a brief account of the conquest of Dacia.[152] It is the first reference, in a Spanish chronicle, to Trajan as the conqueror of Dacia.

We could say that the opposite process occurred in the historiographic consciousness of the Romanians. And in fact, from the sixteenth century, the central theme of Romanian historiography has at the same time been the principal reason for the nation's pride: Latin descent. Rome and the idea of Latinity hold the first place in the formation of Romanian culture. It is not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the Dacians are "rediscovered," in the daring study in which Hasdeu asked if they had really disappeared.[153] And it is not until about 1920 that, due above

149. *Cuentan las estorias que fue muy sabio a maravilla en la filosofia* (quoted by Busuioceanu, "Utopia," p. 112).

150. Describing the civilizing work of Dicineo, Alfonso follows Jordanes very closely; cf., for example, the passage on the teaching of philosophy and the sciences: "*este Dicineo ensenno a los godos fascas toda la filosophya et la fisica, et la theoria, et la practica, et la logica, et los ordenamientos de los doze signos, et los cossos de las planetas, et el cresçer, et el decresçer de la luna, et el cosso del sol, et la astrologia, et la astronomia, et las sciencias naturales . . .*"; text quoted by Busuioceanu, ibid., pp. 112–13.

151. Busuioceanu, ibid., p. 112.

152. "*A los de Dacia et de Sicia conquirio por batalla et echo de Dacia al rey Decibalo et fizo la tierra provincia de Roma.*" Busuioceanu, who quotes this passage (ibid., p. 113), remarks that it echoes a text of Dio Cassius.

153. B. P. Hasdeu, "Perit-au Dacii?" (*Foiţa de istorià şi literatură* [Iaşi, 1860], No. 2, 3, 4, 5).

all to Pârvan and his pupils, the protohistory and ancient history of Dacia begin to be studied scientifically. But a trend very quickly developed, especially among writers and dilettantes, which in its most extravagant expressions has deserved the name of "Thracomania." It went so far as to speak of the "revolt of the autochthonous base," by which it meant the revolt of the Geto-Thracian element against the forms of Latin thought introduced during the formation of the Romanian people.

The revival of the "autochthonous base" constitutes a sufficiently eventful chapter in the history of modern Romanian culture, but it is beyond the scope of this study. It is enough if we mention that Zalmoxis plays a leading role in this recovery of the most distant past of the Romanian people. Zalmoxis reappears as a prophet in a number of plays; as a religious reformer, comparable to Zarathustra, in various essays and monographs; as a celestial god, the founder of Getic "pre-monotheism," in certain historico-religious interpretations of a theological cast. But always and everywhere Zalmoxis is revivified because he incarnates the religious genius of the Daco-Getae, because, in the last analysis, he represents the spirituality of the "autochthons," of the almost mythical ancestors conquered and assimilated by the Romans.

The "Getae" survived in the mythologized historiography of the Western world because they were confused with the Goths: they had become the mythical ancestors of the Germanic peoples and, later, of the Spaniards. As for their "kings and counselors"—Zalmoxis, Dicineus—they were remembered in the West above all as the civilizing heroes of the "Getae." A comparable process took place in the historiographic consciousness of the Romanians. The Geto-Dacians were recovered as ancestors, and in more cases than one as "mythical ancestors" because they were fraught with a multitude of parahistorical symbols. As for Zalmoxis, in modern Romanian culture he has recovered the primordial religious prestige that he had lost during the first centuries of our era, when he was reduced to the role of civilizing hero. But obviously this rediscovery is itself also a product of culture, and finds its proper place in the history of ideas in modern Romania.

1944, 1969.

3

The Devil and God: Prehistory of the Romanian Folk Cosmogony

THE COSMOGONIC DIVE

In his discussion of Bogomil influences on Romanian folklore N. Cartojan cites a cosmogonic myth, which he summarizes as follows from a Moldavian variant: "Before the world was created there was only an unending mass of water, on which God and Satan walked about. When God had decided to create the Earth he sent Satan 'to the bottom of the sea to take, in God's name, some of the seed of Earth (*sămânţă de pământ*) and bring it back to him on the surface of the water.' Twice Satan dived to the bottom of the sea, but, instead of taking the seed of Earth in God's name, as he had been commanded to do, he took it in his own name. While he was rising to the surface all the seed slipped through his fingers. On a third descent to the bottom of the Waters he took the seed in his own name and in God's. When he returned to the surface, a little mud—that is, the amount he had taken in God's name—remained under his fingernails; all the rest of it had slipped through his fingers. With the mud that was left under the Devil's fingernails God made a mound of earth, on which he lay down to rest. Thinking that God was asleep, Satan decided to throw him into the water and drown him, so that he should be left sole lord of the Earth. But the farther Satan rolled God, the more the Earth grew and spread out under him. And so the Earth kept spreading out until there was no more room for the water."[1]

This Romanian cosmogonic myth has been recorded in several variants, the best known of which were published and studied by Tudor Pamfile, Elena Niculiţă Voronca, Florian Marian, and I. A. Candrea.[2] N. Cartojan points out that the Bulgarian scholar Jordan Ivanov, who does not doubt the Bogomil origin of the myth, has also published other Slavic folk legends, and has thus illustrated the dissemination of the motif as far as eastern and northern Russia.[3] However, Cartojan adds, the Bulgarian scholar was unaware of O. Dähnhardt's book *Natursagen.* But at the date when Jordan Ivanov's and Cartojan's books appeared the material brought together by Dähnhardt in the first volume of his work, and especially his attempt to analyze this cosmogonic myth and trace its history, were the most important contribution toward solving the problem.[4]

1. N. Cartojan, *Cărţile populare în literatura românească,* 1 (Bucharest, 1929): 37–38. The present chapter enlarges on our preliminary study "Preistoria unui motiv folkloric românesc" (*Buletinul Bibliotecii Române din Freiburg* 3 [1955–56]: 41–54). Cf. also "Un volum de cercetări literare" (*Vremea,* Bucharest, 3 July 1934), and "Cărţile populare in literatura românească" (*Revista Fundaţiilor Regale,* 1939; also published in French: "Les livres populaires dans la littérature roumaine," *Zalmoxis* 2 [1939; published in 1941]: 63–78).

2. *Şezătoarea, Revistă pentru literatură şi tradiţiuni populare* (1892 ff.) 2: 99–104; 3: 1–2, 25; Tudor Pamfile, *Povestea lumii de demult,* pp. 14, 17–18, 25–27; Elena Niculiţă Voronca, *Datinele şi credinţele poporului român* 1 (Cernăuţi, 1903): 5–7, 22, 143–144; 2 (1912): 244 ff.; Florian Marian, *Insectele în limba, credinţele şi obiceiurile Românilor* (Bucharest, 1903), pp. 122–24; Marian, *Inmormântarea la Români* (Bucharest, 1892), pp. 49–51; I. A. Candrea, *Iarba fiarelor. Studii de folklor* (Bucharest, 1928), pp. 59 ff.; Cartojan, *Cărţile populare,* p. 41 (bibliography).

3. Jordan Ivanov, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi* (Sofia, 1925), summarized by Cartojan, *Cărţile populare,* p. 38. Some of Ivanov's theses are discussed in Émile Turdeanu's article, "Apocryphes bogomiles et apocryphes pseudo-bogomiles" (*Rev. Hist. Rel.* 138 [1950]: 22–52, 176–218). See also below, p. 89, n. 25.

4. Oskar Dähnhardt, *Natursagen, Eine Sammlung Naturdeutender Sagen, Märchen, Fabeln und Legenden* 1: *Sagen zum Alten Testament* (Leipzig-Berlin, 1907): 1–89. Cartojan overlooked J. Feldmann's study, *Paradies und Sündenfall* (Münster, 1913), in which the cosmogonic myth is discussed (pp. 337 ff., 381 ff.) from a point of view different from Dähnhardt's.

Cartojan summarizes and adopts the conclusions at which Dähnhardt had arrived in 1907. As the Romanian variant shows, the myth comprises two motifs: (1) the oceanic motif of the primordial Waters, from whose depths the "seed of Earth" is brought, and (2) the dualistic motif of the creation of the World by two antagonistic Beings. The dualism, Dähnhardt concluded (*Natursagen*, 1: 36 ff.), is certainly of Iranian origin. The oceanic motif, though unknown in Iran, is abundantly documented in India. Hence the cosmogonic myth, as it circulated in the Balkans and among other peoples of central and eastern Europe, would be the product of the fusion of two different themes, one Indian, the other Iranian. Summarizing Dähnhardt's findings, Cartojan concludes as follows: "The oceanic motif emigrated from India to Iran, where it combined with the dualistic myth. In this form it was later adopted by the heretical Christian sects that proliferated in Asia Minor during the first centuries of our era (Gnostics, Mandaeans, Manichaeans). These sects altered the Indo-Iranian legend, giving it a Christian form, and transmitted it to the Bogomils."[5]

We shall later discuss the role of the Bogomils in the transmission of this cosmogonic myth. For the moment, we must present the essentials of the documentation supplied by Dähnhardt. Using and supplementing the material collected by Veselovski,[6] Dähnhardt published European versions collected among the Bulgarians, the Transylvanian Gypsies, the Russians, the Ukrainians, the Letts, and in Bukovina. We shall see that the same myth has also been recorded in other parts of central and northern Europe. With some variants—whose importance we shall consider later—the mythical scenario remains the same.

5. Cartojan, *Cărţile populare*, p. 39. Cf. Dähnhardt. *Natursagen* 1:7 ff., 14 ff., 34 ff.

6. A. Veselovski, "Razyskanija v oblasti russkago duchovnago sticha XI (Dualističeskija povêrya o mirozdanji)," in *Sbornik otdelenija russk. jazyka imp. akademii*, 46 (1890): no. 6, pp. 1–116. The study by the Ukrainian scholar M. P. Dragomanov, published in Bulgarian at Sophia in 1892 and 1894, has recently been translated by Earl W. Count, *Notes on the Slavic Religio-Ethical Legends: The Dualistic Creation of the World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961).

SOUTHEASTERN EUROPEAN VERSIONS

The Bulgarian legend relates that in the beginning there was neither Earth nor mankind but only Water, and only God and Satan existed. One day God spoke to Satan, saying: "Let us create the Earth and men." "But where shall we go to find earth?" Satan asked. "Under the water," God answered, "there is earth. Dive and bring back a little mud. But before you dive you must say: 'By God's power and mine!' and you will reach the bottom and you will find earth." But Satan said, "By my power and God's," and so he could not reach the bottom of the sea. It was only after he had spoken the right formula that, diving for the third time, he reached the bottom and succeeded in bringing back a little mud under his fingernails. From this little, God created the Earth. When God fell asleep the Devil dragged him to the edge of the water and tried to drown him. But the earth kept spreading out, so the Devil could never reach the water.[7] We shall see that this endless expansion of the Earth prepares the way for another mythological episode, in which God's stature seems all of a sudden to be strangely diminished.

The following legend was collected among the Transylvanian Gypsies: In the beginning there were only the Waters. God thought of making the world, but he knew neither how nor why to do it. And he was angry because he had neither brother nor friend. In a rage he threw his stick onto the Waters. It changed into a great tree, and under the tree God saw the Devil, who laughed and said: "Good day, my good brother! You have neither brother nor friend, I will be your brother and your friend!" God was glad and answered: "You shall not be my brother but my friend. I must not have a brother." They traveled for nine days on the surface of the Waters, and God understood that the Devil did not love him. Once the Devil said to him: "My good brother, alone we live badly, we must create other beings!" "Then create," God answered. "But I

7. A. Strauss, *Die Bulgaren* (Leipzig, 1898), pp. 6 ff.; Dähnhardt, *Natursagen*, p. 2; Feldmann, *Paradies u. Sündenfall*, p. 364; Dragomanov, *Notes*, pp. 1–3. It is only in this Bulgarian version of our myth that God tells the Devil to take mud "by God's power and mine." In all the other versions God tells him to speak only his divine name. Another, simpler variant is recorded by O. D. Kowatcheff, "Bulgarische Volksglaube aus dem Gebiet der Himmelskunde" (*Zeitschrift f. Ethnologie* 63 [1931]: 340).

do not know how, dear brother!" "Very well," God answered, "then I will create the World. Dive into the great Waters and bring me some sand; with the sand I will make the World." Astonished, the Devil asked him: "You mean to make the World from sand? I do not understand!" God explained to him: "I will speak my name over the sand, and the Earth will be born. Go, and bring back sand!" The Devil dived, but he too wanted to make a World, and since he now had sand he spoke his own name. But the sand burned him, and he had to drop it; then he told God that he had found nothing. God sent him again. For nine days the Devil held the sand, all the while speaking his own name, and the sand burned him more and more, so that he became all black and finally had to drop it. When God saw him he cried: "You have turned black, you are a bad friend; go, bring sand, but do not speak your name again, or you will be burned to nothing." The Devil dived again and this time brought back sand. God made the World, and the Devil was very glad. "I will live here under this great tree," he said. "As for you, my dear brother, find somewhere else to live." God became angry. "You are a very bad friend," he cried. "I will have nothing more to do with you. Go away!" Then a great bull appeared and carried away the Devil. From the great tree flesh fell to the ground, and men sprang from its leaves.[8]

A Russian variant narrates the Devil's three dives and the creation of the World from a little mud that had remained under his fingernails. Furious, the Devil wanted to take the Earth and throw it into the Waters. But it was too late: the Devil could no longer grasp the Earth, which, spreading out in every direction, became limitless.[9]

8. H. V. Wlislocki, *Märchen und Sagen Transsilvanischen Zigeuner* (Berlin, 1892), p. 1; Dähnhardt, *Natursagen*, pp. 34–35; Feldmann, *Paradies u. Sündenfall*, pp. 364 ff. The myth appears not to be known by the Gypsies of the Near East and the West. Dähnhardt holds that the various elements of the legend have analogues in the Altaian and Iranian traditions, and he postulates an Indo-Iranian origin for the Gypsy myth (*Natursagen*, pp. 35–36).

9. Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* 1:43, drawing on *Etnograf. Sbornik* 6 (1864): sect. 1, p. 122. According to another legend, documented among the Raskolniki of Estonia, the Devil had hidden a little mud in his mouth. When God ordered the earth to increase and spread out, the mud hidden in the Devil's mouth began to swell, and it was by spitting it out that the Devil brought the deserts, the marshes, and the rocks into existence; cf. Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* 1:54. Cf. a similar legend from Bukovina, farther on, n. 11. The other Russian variants are discussed below, pp. 94 ff.

The following legend was recorded in Bukovina: When only Heaven and the Waters existed, God moved about the Waters in a boat. He came upon a ball of foam, in which was the Devil. "Who are you?" asked God. The Devil refused to answer except on condition that God take him into the boat. God accepted and received the answer: "I am the Devil!" After traveling for a long time in silence, the Devil said: "How good it would be if firm ground existed!" God then commanded him to dive and take sand in God's name. The familiar details follow: the three dives, the creation of the World from a few grains of sand, God resting during the night, the Devil's attempt to drown him, with the usual consequences, the expansion of the Earth.[10]

One of the Lettish legends given by Dähnhardt is simpler: God sends the Devil to bring him sand and makes the World from what remained under his fingernails. There is no more question of taking sand in God's name, or of the Devil's attempt to drown God (Dähnhardt, *Natursagen*, 1: 44). In other Lettish variants the Devil keeps a little mud in his mouth; when the mud begins to swell, the Devil spits it out and so produces the mountains (ibid., pp. 56–57). Similar legends have been recorded in Little Russia, in the Ukraine, and in Bukovina.[11]

10. Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* 1:43, drawing on *Zeitschrift für deutsche Mythologie* 1: 178; Feldmann, *Paradies u. Sündenfall*, p. 394. According to Dähnhardt, this Bukovinan myth is similar to a Galician version published by Afanasiev.

11. The actors in the Little Russian legend are God and the Archangel Satanail. The latter hides a little sand under his tongue, but he has to spit it out, and his spittle produces the mountains and rocks (Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* 1:52; ibid., p. 56, a Ukrainian legend). According to the Bukovinan legend, the Devil had swallowed a little mud. When God blessed the Earth, the mud began to grow too, and the Devil nearly burst. God took pity on him and ordered him to vomit it up, and so the mountains were made; cf. Voronca, *Datinele şi credinţele poporului român* 1: 15; Candrea, *Iarba fiarelor*, p. 63. Dähnhardt classes these variants among the legends concerning the origin of mountains; *Natursagen* 1:52 ff.

POLISH, BALTIC, AND MORDVINIAN VARIANTS

We now add some new documents to those cited by Dähnhardt. Except for the concluding detail the Polish legend is astonishingly close to the variant collected in Bukovina: God rows about in a boat, comes upon a ball of foam in which he sees the Devil, and takes him into the boat. When the Devil said he wished there were some solid place, God told him to dive to the bottom of the sea and bring him back some sand. With the sand God made the Earth, but it was barely big enough for the two of them to lie down comfortably. The Devil, seeing that God had fallen asleep, began pushing him toward the sea. But it was to no avail, for the Earth kept enlarging and spreading out under God. Finally God woke and ascended to Heaven. The Devil followed him, but God threw a thunderbolt and hurled him into the abyss.[12]

According to a Finnish version, before the Creation of the World God stood on a golden pillar in the middle of the sea. Seeing his image in the water, he cried: "Get up!" The image was the Devil. God asked him how the World could be made. The Devil answered: "By diving to the bottom of the sea three times!" God ordered the Devil to dive. The third time, he managed to bring back some mud. But he hid a little of it in his mouth, and it swelled and hurt him. God took the mud from the Devil's mouth and threw it toward the north, and so the stones and rocks came into existence.[13]

12. I. Piatowska, "Obyczaje ludu ziemi sieradzkiez," *Lud* 4:4 (1898): 414–15. The same legend in Galicia: after the bringing of the sand and the Creation, "God, tired out, went to sleep to rest himself," and the Devil tried to drown him: cf. B. Gustawicz, "Kilka szczegółów ludoznawczych w powiatu bobreckiego," *Lud* 7:3 (1902): 267–68. (I owe these two references to the kindness of Professor Evel Gasparini.) In all probability God's ascent to Heaven and his pursuit by the Devil, with the latter's being hurled into the abyss, are elements that derive from another myth.

13. Translated from the Finnish journal *Antero Vipunu* 1: 2:25, in Wilhelm Schmidt, *Ursprung der Gottesidee* 6 (Münster, 1935):568, and 12 (1955):49. A similar variant in Elli Kaija Köngäs, "The Earth-Diver" (*Ethnohistory* 7 [1960]:151–80), p. 161. The identity between the image of God and the Devil is reminiscent of a Bulgarian legend that does not belong to the cosmogonic cycle. While walking alone, God sees his shadow and cries: "Rise, comrade!" Satan rises from God's shadow and asks him to divide the universe between them: the Earth for him, Heaven for God; the living for God and the dead for him. And they sign an agreement in these terms (Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* 1:44; Schmidt, *Ursprung* 12:123; cf. also Strauss, *Die Bulgaren,* p. 9).

The Estonians relate that in the beginning the spirit of God (*jumala vaim*) moved over the Waters. He heard a sound and saw bubbles rising to the surface and a voice called to him: "Wait for me!" God waited. "Who are you?" he asked. "I am another." God sent him to the bottom of the sea to fetch silt. The Other kept a little of it in his mouth, and when the silt began to grow God said to him: "Spit it out, Satan!" and that was how he received the name of Satan. And where Satan spat, the marshes and lakes appeared.[14]

Though it belongs to the group of Ugrian myths that we shall present farther on with the central Asian traditions, we will also cite the following Mordvinian variant: God (Tšam-Pas) was alone on a rock. He thought of making the world. "I have no brother and no companions with whom I can discuss this matter!" he said, and he spat on the Waters. From his spittle a mountain was born. Tšam-Pas struck it with his stick, the mountain burst open, and the Devil (Saitan) emerged from it. As soon as he had appeared, the Devil proposed to God that they be brothers and create the world together. "We will not be brothers," Tšam-Pas replied, "but companions." And he sent him to fetch sand from the bottom of the sea. But instead of speaking God's name Saitan spoke his own, flames shot up from the bottom of the sea, and he emerged burned all over. Diving for the third time, he spoke God's name and succeeded in grasping some sand, but he kept a little of it in his mouth. When the sand in his mouth began to grow and his head had become as big as a mountain and was on the point of bursting, God took pity on him and struck him on the head. Saitan spat so violently that the Earth shook, and it was from its shaking that the mountains and hills came into existence.[15]

14. Oskar Loorits, *Grundzüge des estnischen Volksglauben* 1 (Uppsala-Lund, 1949):455–56. Loorits had already presented and analyzed this myth in his "Contribution to the material concerning Baltic-Byzantine cultural relation" (*Folklore* 45 [1934]: 47–73), pp. 48 ff. He considers it Oriental in origin; according to him, it came to Russia by way of Byzantium, and was disseminated as far as the Baltic countries by the Russians.

15. Strauss, *Die Bulgaren,* pp. 17–19; Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* 1:60–62;

We shall not present all the European variants. The reader will find the rest of them in the works by Dähnhardt, Feldmann, and W. Schmidt. We shall have occasion to cite some others when we study the distribution of this cosmogonic myth in central and northern Asia. We may add that the theme of the antagonism between two Supernatural Beings and the dive into the sea is the central element of another legendary cycle, in which the two leading roles are played by the Prophet Elijah and the Devil, or the Emperor Diocletian and Saint John the Baptist.[16] But before we undertake this comparative study, we will look more closely at the Balkan documents we have cited.

GOD'S "WEARINESS"

Among the Romanians the myth has a continuation that is not without significance for our investigation. When he woke, God saw that the Earth had spread out so far that there was no more room for the Waters. Not knowing how to deal with this emergency, he sent the bee to the hedgehog—the most knowing of animals—to ask its advice. But the hedgehog refused to help, giving the excuse that God is omniscient. However, the bee knew that the hedgehog was in the habit of talking to itself. And sure enough, it soon murmured: "Obviously God doesn't know that he must make mountains and valleys, to leave room for the Waters." The bee flew off to God, and the hedgehog put a curse on it that it should eat only ordure. But God blessed the bee: the filth that it ate would become honey.[17]

Among the Bulgarians the myth is still more drastic. The Earth had grown so big that the Sun could no longer cover it. God created angels, and sent the angel of war to Satan to ask him what was to be done. But the angel of war was unable to enter the Devil's presence. Then God created the bee and sent it to perch on the Devil's shoulder and overhear what he said. "Oh, how stupid God is!" the Devil murmured. "He doesn't know that he should take a stick, make the sign of the cross in the four directions, and say: 'That is Earth enough!'" The bee hurried off to tell God how to solve the problem.[18] In another Bulgarian variant God had made the Earth so big that the Sky could no longer cover it. Since he did not know what to do, but had noticed that the Devil was talking with the hedgehog, he sent the bee to listen to them. "God doesn't know," the Devil said, "that he ought to take a stick and hit the Earth with all his might, to make the mountains and valleys. Then he can cover the Earth with the Sky."[19]

The hedgehog appears again in a Lettish legend. God had made the Earth spread too far and could not get it back under the vault of the Sky. The hedgehog, which happened to be going by, asked God what was puzzling him. When God told the hedgehog of his cosmogonic misadventure, it reassured him: "It is no great matter," it said, "you have only to squeeze a little, and the Earth will fit under the cover of the Sky." By squeezing the Earth, God produced the mountains and valleys. And to reward the hedgehog he gave it a coat made of needles, so that no enemy can come near it.[20]

Feldmann, *Paradies v. Sündenfall*, pp. 378 ff.; Schmidt, *Ursprung* 12:45 ff. Add: Uno Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen der Mordwinen* (Helsinki, 1954), pp. 134–35 (the Devil dives in the shape of a goose).

16. The Devil, who had stolen the Sun, plays ball with Elijah. The latter throws his ball into the sea, and when the Devil dives to retrieve it, Elijah makes the sea freeze over, takes the Sun, and flies up to Heaven. The Devil manages to break the ice, follows the saint, and tears off a piece of his heel. In Serbian folk songs the characters are respectively the Emperor Diocletian and Saint John the Baptist. They play with an apple and a crown. Saint John throws the apple into the sea, and while the emperor tries to retrieve it, he makes the sea freeze over, seizes the crown, and sets off for Heaven. The crown is the Sun, for the saint enters paradise carrying *sjajno sunce*, "the shining sun." Cf. E. Gasparini, *La civiltà matriarcale degli Slavi* (university course, 1955–56; lithographed, Venice, 1956), pp. 90 ff.; Gasparini, *Credenze religiose e obblighi nuziali degli antichi Slavi* (university course; lithographed, Venice, 1960), pp. 9 ff. According to Gasparini, these legends represent the *lunarizzazione* of the myth of fishing up the Earth; see *Credenze religiose*, p. 11.

17. Marian, *Insectele*, p. 122; Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* 1:42–43.

18. Strauss, *Die Bulgaren*, pp. 7 ff. The Devil sentences the bee to eat its excreta, but God blesses it: none shall be sweeter than thou!

19. Dähnhardt, *Natursagen*, 1:127.

20. Ibid., p. 128. The similarity between the Romanian and Lettish variants is remarkable; we shall take it into consideration when we discuss the hypothesis that these legends were disseminated by the Bogomils; cf. farther on.

This cosmogonic myth is clearly distinct from both the biblical and the Mediterranean traditions. The God whose cosmogonic difficulties we have just witnessed has nothing in common either with the Creator-God of the Old Testament or with the creator-gods or sovereign gods of Greek mythology. Then too, the mythological landscape itself is entirely different. It lacks the amplitude, the majesty of the Greek and biblical cosmogonies. To be sure, the primordial Great Waters are present, but the mythical scenario itself and the actors in it are far from impressive: a God who creates unwillingly, or at the Devil's suggestion, and with his help, and who does not know how to finish his work; a Devil who sometimes shows more intelligence than God, but who uses childish subterfuges (hiding a little mud in his mouth, trying to drown God by pushing him into the water, etc.); the bee and the hedgehog. Such a humble, unpretentious mythical universe is not without significance. Whatever the origin of this cosmic myth may be, it seems certain that it circulated among the folk and had to adapt itself to limited audiences.

The myth can be reduced to the following elements: (1) the primordial Waters; (2) God moving about on the surface of the Waters; (3) the Devil, who appears at the beginning of the narrative, or whom God comes upon later, or whom he involuntarily creates from his shadow, his spittle, or his stick; (4) the "seed of Earth,"[21] which lies at the bottom of the Waters, of whose existence God alone knows, and from which he alone can make the World, but which, for unknown reasons, he either will not or cannot bring up himself, so he sends the Devil to fetch it; (5) the Devil's three dives, and his inability to take the mud in his own name; (6) the creative power of God, which prodigiously enlarges the few grains of sand or the traces of mud that the Devil brings up under his fingernails. But this creation is in some degree "magical" and "automatic": the Earth grows from its seed rather after the fashion of the

21. The same expression is found in a Caucasian variant (Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* 1:53) and among the Voguls (ibid., pp. 66–67). The image of the Earth growing at a dizzying speed from a "seed" deserves a special study; cf. the cosmogonic egg or the primordial embryo (Hiraṇyagarbha) floating on the primitive ocean.

"mango trick," in which a mango tree shoots dizzyingly up from its seed and bears fruit in a few seconds; or else the Earth enlarges "automatically," without God's knowledge, simply because the Devil tried to drown him while he slept; (7) what is really surprising in these mythological narratives is *God's weariness after creating the World.* God wants to rest, or feels the need to sleep; he falls into a sound sleep, like a peasant after his day's work, and so deeply that he does not even feel the Devil pushing him. It is true that in such folktales God is often strongly anthropomorphized. Yet in our myth God's weariness and his sleep seem unjustified, for in point of fact God has scarcely worked at all; it is the Devil who dived three times (and does not feel the need for sleep after it), and it is by "magic" that the Earth is so greatly enlarged; (8) this unexpectedly negative note, present in the figure of God, becomes even more marked in the second part of the myth, when God admits his inability to solve a small postcosmogonic problem and has to ask advice from the Devil or the hedgehog.[22] The physical fatigue that had forced him to lie down and fall sound asleep *is now accompanied by a mental fatigue;* suddenly God, who had seemed to be omniscient (he possessed the essential knowledge: where to find the "seed of Earth" and how to create the World), displays a strangely diminished intelligence: even when his creative faculties are still intact (as in the Bulgarian variant, in which he creates the angels and then the bee), his mental inertia seems to be complete; and it is not only the Devil who knows the solution to his problem but also the hedgehog—hence (though the narrative does not mention it) one of God's own creations.

Even more than their "dualism," it is this series of elements—God's weariness, his deep sleep, the diminution of his intelligence

22. To be sure, the "prehistory" of this motif must be sought in the need to divorce God from the existence of valleys and mountains; these were created later and of necessity; in the beginning the Earth was flat—we know that the perfect plain is a paradisal syndrome in many mythologies, both Indo-Iranian and primitive: the world was flat at the beginning of the creation, and will be so again at the end of the cycle, when the creation will be symbolically or concretely repeated. But the fact remains that God had not known where to stop when he blessed the handful of earth to cause it to increase and spread out. This is another proof that its dizzyingly rapid increase was "magical" and beyond the Creator's power to control.

—that help to give an absolutely distinctive character to the Romanian and southeastern European cosmogonic myths. For, as we shall soon see, the "weariness" or the "decline" of God are not an integral part of the myth as it is known in central and northern Asia.

Whatever the origin of this mythological theme may be, one thing would seem beyond doubt: the dramatic character of the last narratives we have analyzed is due less to the Devil's antagonism than to God's passivity and his incomprehensible decline. It is needless to repeat that this God has nothing in common with the Creator-God and Cosmocrator of Judeo-Christianity. And though the religious life of all these southeastern European peoples is inspired by the Christian faith and has its source in belief in a triune God, in the cosmogonic legends with which we are concerned, as well as in some other folklore themes, we are confronted with a different type of God—suffering from his solitude, feeling the need for a companion to make the World, absentminded, weary, and, in the last analysis, unable to complete the creation without help.

This God can be compared to the *deus otiosus* of so many "primitive" religions, in which, after creating the World and men, God loses interest in the fate of his Creation and withdraws to the Sky, leaving the completion of his work to a Supernatural Being or a demiurge. We do not claim that the *deus otiosus* of archaic societies —as he is found, for example, among the Selk'nam, the Bambuti, and among so many other African peoples[23]—survives in the beliefs of the peoples of southeastern Europe. There is no need to suppose a survival from the earliest times; a process that can have taken place much later provides a more than adequate explanation. In other words, the negative characteristics revealed in our cosmogonic myths can be interpreted as the comparatively recent folk expression of a *deus otiosus*, of a God who withdraws after creating the World, and who, by the same token, is no longer the central figure of the cult. We may add that the theme of the "distant god" plays a leading role in Romanian religious folklore, and that it is

23. Cf. some examples in our *Traité d'Histoire des Religions* (Paris, 1949), pp. 52 f., 55 f.

also abundantly documented among the other peoples of southeastern Europe. According to these beliefs, in the beginning God came down from time to time to walk about on the Earth, in company with Saint Peter, but because of the sins of mankind he gave up these visits and withdrew to Heaven once and for all. God's distance is directly justified by mankind's depravity. God withdraws to Heaven because men have chosen evil and sin. This is one mythical expression of God's detachment from evil and from sinful humanity; we shall have occasion to point out others. But it is clear that this God who withdraws and becomes distant is not the God of Judeo-Christianity.

SLAVIC "DUALISM"?

Whence comes this concept of a God who created the World with the Devil's help, who falls asleep after creating it, who escapes unharmed from the Devil's attack, but who, at least in some variants, proves unable to finish his cosmogonic work alone? As we said, an attempt has been made to interpret these Balkan legends as the expression of Bogomil beliefs. After Veselovski, Hasdeu, and Dähnhardt, such Slavonic scholars as Jordan Ivanov, F. Haase,[24] and others have maintained this hypothesis on the strength of various arguments.[25] The problem of Bogomilism has many aspects, and we do not intend to discuss the whole of it here.[26] But

24. Especially in his *Volksglaube und Brauchtum der Ostslaven* (Breslau, 1939), pp. 231 ff.

25. In his study, E. Turdeanu showed that a large number of supposedly Bogomil beliefs are already documented in apocrypha that have nothing in common with Bogomilism and even precede it in time. Russo had already criticized B. P. Hasdeu's hypothesis and pointed out the patristic precedents and parallels for the folk texts that Hasdeu considered heretical and specifically Bogomilistic; cf. *Studii bizantino-române* (Bucharest, 1907) and *Studii şi Critice* (Bucharest, 1910). N. Minissi considers Turdeanu's interpretation too rigid; cf. "La Tradizione apocrifa e le origini del Bogomilismo," *Ricerche Slavistiche* 3 (1954): 97–113, especially pp. 111 f. It should be stated that Turdeanu studies only the apocryphal literature, not the oral traditions.

26. An exhaustive bibliography will be found in Dimitri Obolensky, *The Bogomils. A Study in Balkan Neo-Manichaeism* (Cambridge, 1948), pp. 290–

we may observe that the hypothesis of the Bogomil origin of the cosmogonic myth encounters several difficulties. In the first place, the myth is not found in any Bogomil text. What is more, the myth is not documented in Serbia, or in Bosnia or Herzegovina, despite the fact that Bosnia remained an important center of the sect down to the fifteenth century.[27] Although, according to Toth Szabo Pal, vestiges of Bogomil beliefs survived in Hungary until the fifteenth century and did not disappear until after the Reformation,[28] although a dualistic myth of the creation of man has been recorded in Hungary,[29] the cosmogonic motif with which we are concerned has not been found there. On the other hand, as we have seen, variants have been collected in the Ukraine, in Russia, and in the Baltic regions, which Bogomil beliefs never reached. In addition, the myth occurs neither in Germany nor in the West, although the Cathars and the *Patarini* disseminated a number of folklore motifs of Bogomil and Manichaean origin as far as southern France, Germany, and the Pyrenees.[30] Finally, as we shall see in a moment, the most frequent documentation of the myth occurs among the Turco-Mongol peoples of central Asia.

Some Russian scholars, and most recently Uno Harva, have attributed the dissemination of the myth beyond the Urals to the Russians.[31] But if we admit that the Russians did not receive it from the Bogomils, from what source did they obtain it? Some scholars have tried to explain Bogomilism by the previous existence of a strong religious dualism among the ancient Slavs.[32] The idea of "Slavic dualism" goes back to a statement by Helmold (*Chronica Slavorum* [I, 52], written in 1164–68). After enjoying great authority, Helmold's testimony was rejected by Aleksander Brückner, who maintained that Helmold had retrospectively applied the Christian concept and iconography of the Devil to Slavic paganism.[33] But Brückner's hypercritical attitude appears to be outmoded today; such scholars as V. Pisani, G. Vernadski, Roman Jakobson, and Evel Gasparini accept Helmold's testimony and, with it, the "dualism" of the primitive Slavs.[34] This new methodological orientation is reinforced by the resemblances—recently brought to light—between the Slavs and the Iranians on the one hand,[35] and between the Thraco-Phrygians, the Iranians, and the Slavs

304, to be supplemented by the studies by Turdeanu, Minissi, Alois Schmaus, "Der Neumanichäismus auf dem Balkan" (*Saeculum* 2 [1951]: 271–99) and H. C. Puech, "Catharisme médiéval et bogomilisme," in *Oriente e Occidente nel medioevo* (Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei 12, Convegno "Volta" [Rome, 1957]: 56–84). See also O. Bihalgi-Merin and A. Benac, *The Bogomils* (London, 1962).

27. Cf. Puech, "Catharisme médiéval," pp. 69 ff., with the bibliography given in n. 2, p. 69.

28. Cartojan, *Cărţile populare în literatura românească* 1: 32.

29. Cf. H. von Wlislocki, *Volksglauben und religiöser Brauch der Magyaren* (Münster, 1893), p. 93; Dähnhardt, *Natursagen*, p. 99.

30. On the dissemination of an Iranian dualistic theme as far as Brittany (cf. P. Sébillot, *Contes des provinces de France* [Paris, 1920], pp. 209 ff.) and in Provence (P. Sébillot, *Folklore de France* [Paris, 1904–7], 3: 4), see A. H. Krappe, "A Persian theme in the Roman de Renard" (*Modern Language Notes* 58 [1943]: 515–19), especially p. 516. Gaston Paris had already pointed out its Manichaean origin (cf. *Journal des Savants* [1894], p. 606, n. 3).

31. Cf. Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völker*, p. 102.

32. Ivanov, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi*, pp. 361 ff., had refuted this hypothesis. But see also Haase, *Volksglaube u. Brauchtum der Ostslaven*, pp. 241 ff.

33. Aleksander Brückner, *Mitologia slava* (traduzione dal polaco e note de Julia Dicksteinówna, Bologna, 1924), pp. 203 ff., 207, etc. The same argument in Ivanov, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi*, pp. 361 ff. Cf. also B. O. Unbegaun, "La religion des anciens Slaves" (in *Mana* 2: III [1948]), p. 420.

34. Cf. V. Pisani, *Le religioni dei Celti e dei Balto-Slavi nell' Europa precristiana* (Milan, 1940), pp. 49 ff.; G. Vernadsky, *The Origins of Russia* (Oxford, 1959), pp. 118 ff.; R. Jakobson, "Slavic Mythology" (in Funk and Wagnall's *Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend* 2 [1950]: 1025 ff.); Gasparini, *Credenze religiose e oblighi nuziali degli antichi Slavi*, pp. 54 ff. and passim. Alois Schmaus is more skeptical: cf. "Zur altslawischen Religionsgeschichte" (*Saeculum* 4 [1953]: 206–30), pp. 223 ff. On the concept of the divinity among the Slavs cf. Bruno Meriggi, "Il concetto del Dio nelle religioni dei popoli slavi" (*Ricerche Slavistiche* 1 [1952]: 148–76).

35. Cf. Jakobson, "Slavic Mythology," p. 1025; K. H. Menges, "Early Slavo-Iranian contacts and Iranian influences in Slavic mythology" (*Symbolae in honorem Z. V. Togan* [Istanbul, 1950–55], pp. 468–79).

on the other.[36] *A priori,* it is not impossible that certain "dualistic" beliefs disseminated in the Balkans and the Carpatho-Danubian regions represent vestiges of religious beliefs from the Thraco-Scythian substratum.[37] It should also be added that "dualistic" tendencies were manifested rather late among the eastern Slavs. Gershom Scholem tentatively suggested that Polish sabbatarianism might have been influenced by certain Russian sects that flourished more particularly in the Ukraine after the great schism of the Raskolniki.[38]

It is not for us to take sides in this discussion: our subject is not religious dualism but only its effects on the theme of the cosmogonic dive. This myth, involving diving by the Devil or by a water bird, followed by God's creative work, is documented at twenty-four points in the Balto-Slavic domain (six of which are in the Ukraine and eleven in Great Russia) and at twelve points in the Finno-Ugrian territory. Arguing from these facts, I. Grafenauer has seen in this cosmogonic myth a proof that the ancient Slavs believed in a Supreme Being.[39] The hypothesis has been rejected by F. Bezlaj, who reproaches Grafenauer with arguing on too narrow a basis.[40] E. Gasparini rightly replies that this cosmogonic myth is one of the most widespread on earth, and that its dissemination in Eurasia is especially intensive (*Credenze religiose,* pp. 4 ff.).

36. Cf. Jakobson, "Slavic Mythology," p. 1025; Ivan Popovič, "Illyro-Slavica" (*Annali dell' Istituto Universitario Orientale,* Naples, Sezione linguistica, 1, 2 [1959], pp. 165–76).

37. Cf. Ugo Bianchi, *Il dualismo religioso* (Rome, 1958), pp. 42 ff. The archaism of the folklores of southeastern Europe is beyond doubt; cf. further on, chap. 5.

38. G. Scholem, "Le mouvement sabataïste en Pologne" (first article, *Rev. Hist. Rel.,* 143 [1953]: 30–90), p. 38.

39. I. Grafenauer, "Ali je praslovanska beseda 'bog' iranska izposojenka," in *Slovenski Etnograf* 5 [1952]: 237–50; Gasparini, *Credenze religiose e oblighi nuziali,* p. 4.

40. F. Bezlaj, "Nekaj besedi o slovenski mitologiji v zadnjih desetih letih," in *Slovenski Etnograf* 3–4 [1951]: 348; Gasparini, *Credenze religiose e oblighi nuziali,* p. 4.

Independently from Grafenauer, Evel Gasparini had tried to elucidate the concept of the Supreme Being among the primitive Slavs. So far as it is possible to judge from his still provisional findings, Gasparini considers the myth of "fishing up the Earth," as it is found among the Slavs, to be the result of a strong influence from lunar mythology.[41] But Gasparini insists on Helmold's testimony that the Slavs do not deny the existence of a single God in the heavens (*non diffitentur unum deum in coelis*), but they hold that this god is concerned only with celestial affairs (*coelestia tantum curare*), having abandoned the government of the World to lesser divinities whom he procreated (*hos vero distributis officiis obsequentes de sanguine eius processisse*). Helmold calls this god *prepotens* and *deus deorum,* but he is not a god of mankind; he reigns over the other gods (*coeteris imperitans*), and he has no further relation with the Earth.[42] Gasparini compares this "distant God" to the celestial Gods of the Finno-Ugrians and of the Turkic peoples of central Asia: sublime creator-gods, but passive, and lacking images and without a cult (*Credenze religiose,* pp. 64 ff.). He concludes that among the ancient Slavs, just as among the Finno-Ugrians, the celestial God withdraws from the World and becomes a *deus otiosus.*[43]

We will leave discussion of these theses for another occasion. For the moment, let us recall that in the myth of the cosmogonic dive God's inactivity is manifested in a characteristic landscape and scenario, which include the primordial Waters, the antagonism of the adversary, and the weariness, or even the mental inertia, of the

41. Cf. *Corso di Storia delle Lingua e Letteratura Russa* (Anno accademico 1949–50, lithographed course, Venice, 1950), p. 188; cf. also *La civiltà matriarcale,* pp. 90 ff.; id., *Danze e fiabe del mondo slavo* (Venice, 1955, lithographed course), pp. 113 ff.

42. Cf. Gasparini, *Credenze religiose e oblighi nuziali,* pp. 54 ff. Gasparini considers this passage in Helmold the most important document for the religious history of the primitive Slavs, more important even than Procopius' text; ibid., p. 68.

43. Ibid., p. 85. Gasparini also finds other resemblances between Slavs and Finno-Ugrians, for example in nuptial and funerary customs, in alternating songs and the musical scale, in clothing, etc.; cf. Gasparini, "Finni e Slavi" (*Annali dell' Istituto Universitario Orientale,* Sezione Slava, Naples, 1 [1958]: 77–105).

Creator after he has created the World. So we must confine our investigation strictly to these mythological motifs.

SOME RUSSIAN LEGENDS

Thus far we have cited only one Russian variant (see p. 80), since the Russian documents can be grouped apart, notably because the Devil appears in them in the form of a water bird. This is the case with the legend of the Sea of Galilee, an apocryphon included in the "List of Divine Books" and extant in manuscripts of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[44] When neither Heaven nor Earth yet existed, but only the Sea of Galilee, God was flying through the air (probably in the form of a bird). He saw a water bird (*gogol*) swimming on the surface of the sea. It was Satanael. "Who are you?" God asked. "I am God." "Then what do you call me?" "You are the God of Gods and Lord of Lords," Satanael answered. God made him dive to the bottom of the sea and proclaimed him chief of the angels. But when Satanael tried to set his throne above the clouds, God ordered the Archangel Michael to throw him down.

That the legend has been given a Christian coloring is beyond doubt, but the characteristic feature—the ornithomorphism of the Devil—is certainly of central Asian origin. We should note that God was unaware of the existence of the Devil, whereas the latter knew that his partner in the dialogue was the "God of Gods." The legend can be interpreted as an attempt to prove that God does not know the origin of Evil. But this divorce of God from Evil and the Evil One sometimes leads to an unmistakably dualistic position. A variant collected in the Tver district relates that neither God nor Satan was created, and that no one knows whence they come. Satan was like God, except that he could create nothing without God. The myth follows the familiar pattern: God orders Satan to dive, but the Devil keeps a little sand in his hand, and when the Earth begins to extend, the few grains of sand become mountains.[45] In another variant the Devil asks God to become his blood-brother:

44. A bibliography of the first editions and critical studies in Dähnhardt, *Natursagen*, 1: 45, n. 1. Add Ivanov, *Bogomilski knigi i legendi*, pp. 287–311; Puech, *Le traité contre les Bogomiles de Cosmas le Prêtre*, pp. 129 ff.

45. Dähnhardt, *Natursagen*, 1: 338–39, drawing on *Živaja Starina* 9: 393 ff.

"You shall be the younger brother, and I the elder!" And when God bursts out laughing the Devil says he is satisfied to be the younger brother. But God makes the sign of the cross, and the Devil disappears.[46] In this legend we can discern, in strongly Christianized form, the old legend of the consanguinity between God (Christ) and the Devil. The idea that the Evil One is older than God is probably Zervanite in origin (see further on, pp. 107 ff.).

A Great Russian legend tells the story differently. There was a duck on the sea, and the Devil asked it why it was there. "I am a water bird," the duck answered, "my place is on the sea." The Devil commands it to bring him mud, and the duck dives three times. Then God appears and asks where the mud had come from. "The duck brought it," the Devil answers. "Then let us make the World together," God proposes. The Devil dives in his turn, but he hides a little of the mud in his mouth; by spitting it out he produces the mountains.[47] The theme of the duck that precedes the appearance of both God and the Devil is certainly archaic. But the ignorance God shows concerning the source of the mud is certainly an aberrant development; very few other examples of it occur (cf. the Buriat myth, p. 104). The order in which the actors in the myth appear—the duck, the Devil, God—is also rather strange. Very probably the adversary in the form of a bird gave birth to two different figures: the Devil and the duck. And in fact, in another Great Russian variant, the Devil dives in the form of a swan and brings back some silt, from which God makes the World. The swamps and the mountains are made from the little that the Devil had hidden in his mouth.[48] A version from northern Russia shows

46. Dähnhardt, *Natursagen*, 1: 48, following Veselovski.

47. Schmidt, *Ursprung* 12: 56–57, following Dobrovolski.

48. Ibid., pp. 57–58. The Ukrainian versions are close to the Balkan form: God asks the angel Satanael to bring him clay in his name. Satanael keeps a little of it in his mouth, and, when he spits it out, creates the mountains. When God falls asleep Satanael tries to drown him (Strauss, *Die Bulgaren*, pp. 13 ff.; Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* 1:55). According to another variant, God found Satanael in the foam. He gave him a pair of wings and made him an angel. This is as much as to say that God tried to "form" and "spiritualize" a Being whose origin he did not know, but who soon proves to be the Adversary. For God sent him to fetch earth—and from this

God and the Devil in the form of diving ducks, respectively white and black.[49] This is probably due to influence from the legend of the Sea of Galilee.[50]

As we have just seen, the Russian versions contribute a new element: the ornithomorphism of the Devil and, sometimes, of God. This characteristic becomes more marked in the myths of the Eurasian peoples, especially the pastoralists, among whom, according to F. Flor, the theme of the cosmogonic dive becomes a sort of "hallmark."[51] We cannot review the entire documentation. The essentials of it will be found in volumes nine through twelve of the *Ursprung der Gottesidee* by Father Wilhelm Schmidt. The eminent ethnologist used, completed, and integrated the data previously collected by Veselovski, Dähnhardt, and Harva. In the last volume of his enormous work Father Schmidt subjects this cosmogonic myth to a historical analysis with which we are not always in agreement.[52]

point on the narrative follows the same course as the first variant (ibid.). According to a Ruthenian variant, the archangel Satanael dives three times and keeps a little mud in his mouth (ibid., p. 52).

49. Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völker*, p. 97, following Veselovski.

50. But the image "God in the shape of a bird" is also found in other contexts in the religious folklore of eastern Europe. Cf. the Galician Christmas carols (more precisely, from the Dniester region) in which three doves dive, bring up sand, and make the Earth (Dähnhardt, *Natursagen*, p. 59). In a Ukrainian variant, God, Peter, and Paul are on three maple trees in the middle of a blue sea. They dive to the bottom one after the other, to bring up the golden sand needed for the Creation, but only God succeeds (ibid.).

51. F. Flor, "Die Indogermanen in der Völkerkunde. Gedanken um das Problem der Urheimat" (in *Hirt Festschrift*, Heidelberg [1936] 1: 69 ff.), p. 102.

52. Schmidt, *Ursprung* 12: 115–73. It would serve no purpose to list all the passages in the earlier volumes of his *Ursprung* in which Schmidt had studied the "Tauchmotiv." His first attempts toward a synthesis will be found in *Ursprung* 6 (1935): 32–42, and "Das Tauchmotiv in Erdschöpfungsmythen Nordamerikas, Asiens und Europas" (in *Mélanges de linguistique et de philologie offerts à Jacques Van Ginneken*, Paris [1937], pp. 111–22). These pages had already been written before we were able to

THE COSMOGONIC DIVE AMONG THE UGRIANS

We shall begin by summarizing some Uralo-Ugrian myths. The Cheremis relate that before the World was created Keremet, the brother of God (Yuma), was swimming about in the shape of a duck. At Yuma's bidding, Keremet dived and brought back a little mud, but he also kept some in his mouth. God had made the World flat and smooth, but Keremet spat, and so created the mountains.[53] Among the Mansi (Voguls) the Supreme Being, Kors-Torum, sent several diving birds one after the other to fetch him sand from the bottom of the sea. The adversary of God does not appear in this myth.[54] The Voguls have several versions. According to one of them, it was Elempi, the son of the First Couple, who brought up clay by diving in the shape of a water bird.[55] According to another variant, the First Couple lived in a house in the middle of the Waters. One day they saw an iron bird diving and coming back to the surface with a little mud in its beak. In the morning the Earth was there; on the third day the Waters had disappeared completely.[56] Finally, a third Vogul variant suggests features that we have already encountered in the Mordvinian and eastern European legends. From his place above the clouds God spits on the Waters. His spittle gathers into a bubble, and after some time God hears a noise. "Who is making a noise?" God asks. "It is I, Satanael." "Come to me here on the clouds," God commands him. Satanael

read Ugo Bianchi's article, "Le dualisme en histoire des religions" (*Rev. Hist. Rel.*, 159 [1961]: pp. 1–46). See also Alan Dundes, "Earth-diver: Creation of the Mythopoeic Male" (*American Anthropologist* 64 [1962]: 1032–51): toward a psychoanalytic interpretation.

53. Strauss, *Die Bulgaren*, p. 16; Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* 1:60. According to a Mordvinian variant, God spat in the Water and from his spittle Saitan emerged in the shape of a bird (ibid., p. 62).

54. Ibid., pp. 62–63, following Veselovski.

55. Ibid., p. 66, following Lucien Adam, *Revue de Philologie et d'Ethnographie* 1 (1874): 9; see also Schmidt, *Ursprung* 12: 39–40. See also Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völker*, p. 98, following Munkácsi. Schmidt, p. 41, has well shown that this myth includes a number of motifs foreign to the theme of the cosmogonic dive.

56. Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* 1:63, following Munkácsi; Schmidt, *Ursprung*, 12: 41–42.

goes up, and God asks him if, together, they can make the World. "Certainly," Satanael answers. "The seed of Earth can be fetched from the bottom of the sea." He dives and brings up the seed on the sole of his foot, at the same time keeping a little of it in his mouth. When, blessed by God, the Earth begins to spread out, Satanael spits, thus producing the mountains.[57]

We will now cite some myths of the Samoyeds, who are the northern branch of the Uralians. According to a text published by Lehtisalo, Num, the Supreme God, orders some swans and geese to dive in order to see if there is earth at the bottom of the Waters. The birds come back without having found anything. God then sends the black-throated diver. After six days the bird returns to the surface: it had seen earth, but it had not had the strength to bring any back. The *ljuru* bird then dives, and on the seventh day comes back with a little mud in its beak. When Num had already created the Earth an "old man" arrived "from somewhere" and asked him for permission to rest. Num began by refusing, telling him to go and dive for earth himself, but he finally gave him permission. The next morning he found the old man at the edge of the island, destroying it. He had already destroyed a large part of it. Num commanded him to leave, but the old man asked for as much earth as he could cover with the point of his stick. He disappeared into the hole his stick made, after declaring that from then on he would live in it and carry away men. Aghast, Num saw that he had done wrong: he had thought that the old man had wanted to live *on* the Earth, not *under* it.[58]

Certain facts are to be noted: Num sends water birds to dive,[59] not the Devil; the Adversary appears *after* the creation of the

57. Strauss, *Die Bulgaren,* p. 14; Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* 1:66–67; Feldmann, *Paradies u. Sündenfall,* pp. 383 ff.; Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen,* p. 95; Schmidt, *Ursprung* 12: 42–43. The myth then goes on to narrate the creation of the Heavens, the creation of man, and the episode of the dog, which we will summarize further on according to a Samoyed variant (see p. 99).

58. T. Lehtisalo, "Entwurf einer Mythologie der Jurak-Samojeden" (*Mém. de la société finno-ougrienne* 53 [1924]: 8 ff.; Schmidt, *Ursprung* 12: 11–12; cf. also ibid. 3: 352 ff.

59. A myth of the Samoyeds of Turukhansk recounts that after the flood seven survivors were left drifting in a boat. The Waters had increased so greatly that they almost touched the Sky. The men asked a red-throated diver to look for earth. After seven days the bird came back, bringing earth, sand, and herbs. The men threw all this onto the water and prayed; whereupon Num made the World again for them: cf. Walter Anderson, "Nordasiatische Flutsagen" (*Acta et Commentationes Universitatis Dorpatensis. B. Humaniora* 4, 3 [Dorpat, 1923]: 17 ff.

World, but immediately sets about ruining it; finally, he goes under the Earth and declares his enmity to human beings, that is, he reveals himself to be the Lord of the Kingdom of the Dead. The secret lesson of the myth is that Num has nothing to do with the powers of evil that spoil his Creation, and is not directly responsible for the mortality of mankind. (Though death was brought into the World by his lack of foresight: compare the myths that explain the origin of Death by an accident, or by inattentiveness on the part of God, or by the stupidity of the First Men.)

Another Samoyed myth shows Num and Death as antagonists from the beginning. When Ngaa (Death) claimed to be greater than Num, Num ordered him to create the Earth. Ngaa thrust his hand into the water to bring up sand, but the sand ran through his fingers. Then Num created the World and ordered Ngaa to put a whale under the Earth to make it firm. But since the Earth continued to shake, Num ordered him to secure it with a great stone, and Ngaa did so: the stone is the Ural Mountains. "Now that we have made the World," said God, "we must find a Lord for it," and he created a man from a little earth. He also made a dog, to which he gave the duty of guarding the man. But while God was away, Ngaa bribed the dog by promising it a pelt if it would let him approach the man; Ngaa did so, and devoured the man. Num created a human couple and condemned the dog to live on excrement.[60] The "dualistic" elements are markedly emphasized; the theme of the cosmogonic dive is almost forgotten (Ngaa merely thrusts his hand into the Waters), but God's adversary, Death, collaborates in the creation of the World from the beginning.

ALTAIANS, MONGOLS

Among the various Turkic peoples the cosmogonic myths show the fusion of two originally independent motifs even more clearly:

60. Lehtisalo, "Entwurf," pp. 9 ff.; Schmidt, *Ursprung* 12: 12–13.

(1) the water birds that, at God's command, dive to bring back mud; (2) God's adversary, who—whether in human shape or the shape of a bird—performs the same act but also attempts to make a World for himself or tries to ruin the Creation. Thus in a myth of the Lebed Tatars a white swan dives at God's bidding and brings back a little silt in its beak. God makes the World flat and smooth; but he sends another bird and makes the mountains from what it brings back. It is only later that the Devil arrives and makes the marshes.[61] A myth of the Abakan Tatars, also recorded by Radlov, relates that in the beginning nothing existed except a duck. It created a companion for itself—another duck—and sent it to bring back sand. The "companion" dove three times, but kept a little sand for itself, and the duck said to it: "This will become stones." The companion asked it for a little earth for its share, and finally obtained the amount that the point of its stick could cover.[62]

In this last version God—in the shape of a bird—creates a companion in his image. It assists in the creation of the World, but plays the role of God's adversary, though in weakened form. The myth is confused, for Erlik Khan appears later and pollutes man, and, though we are not told where he comes from, we know that he is the Lord of the Underworld. The duck that God created, and that duped him by asking for the hole made by its stick, proves to be the "Devil."

Dualism is decidedly apparent in the myths of the Altaian Tatars. In the beginning, when neither Heaven nor Earth existed but only the Waters, God and a "man" were swimming together in the shape of black geese. The "man" tried to rise higher than God, and fell into the water. He begged God to help him, and God made a stone rise from the Waters, and the "man" sat on it. Later God sent him to fetch silt. But the "man" kept a little of it in his mouth, and when the Earth began to increase in size the silt began to swell. He had

61. W. Radlov, *Aus Sibirien* (Leipzig, 1884) 2: 360; cf. also Schmidt, *Ursprung* 9 (1949): 121 ff.

62. W. Radlov and H. T. Katanov, *Proben der Volksliteratur der türkischen Stämme,* 9 Teil (Saint Petersburg, 1907): 222 ff.; Schmidt, *Ursprung* 9: 512 ff.; ibid. 12: 22–23. The myth then relates the creation of man and the episode of the dog; Erlik Khan tempts it with the pelt, approaches man, and pollutes him.

to spit, thus producing the marshes. God said to him: "You have sinned, and your subjects will be evil. My subjects will be pious; they will see the Sun, the Light, and I shall be called Kurbystan (= Ohrmazd). As for you, you shall be Erlik."[63]

The syncretism with Iranian ideas is obvious.[64] But the scenario of the cosmogonic dive is preserved almost entirely. The identity between the "man" and the Lord of the Underworld, Erlik Khan, is explained by the fact that the First Man, the mythical Ancestor, was also the First of the Dead. The "dualistic" element, and especially the antagonism First Man *vs.* God, is a later development, patterned after the paradigmatic antagonism God *vs.* Devil.

Among the Altai-Kizil, Ülgen plays a less effective role. He goes down into the primordial Waters to create the World; but he does not know what to do or how to do it. He sees a "man" approach. "Who are you?" Ülgen asks him. "I am going to make the Earth," the newcomer answers. God becomes angry. "If I don't know how to create, what makes you think you can do it?" "I know where to find the necessary substance," replies the "man." God then orders him to dive to the bottom of the sea. The "man" finds a mountain and breaks off a fragment of it, which he puts in his mouth. He gives part of it to Ülgen, who spreads it out and so makes the Earth. But the "man" had kept a little of it between his teeth, and spitting it out, he makes the mountains. He asks for as much earth as the point of his stick can cover, and disappears into the hole.[65]

In these four Tatar myths the cosmogonic dive is the central

63. Radlov, *Aus Sibirien* 2: 3–5; a more elaborate version was published by Radlov in the first volume of his *Proben der Volksliteratur* 1: 175–84; cf. also Schmidt, *Ursprung* 9: 102–4, 112 ff., 126 ff.; ibid. 12: 15–17. The myth then recounts the creation of man. Erlik Khan asks for as much ground as he can cover with his stick. He strikes the ground, and noxious animals appear. Finally God sends him underground. The antagonism between Erlik and God does not necessarily imply a "dualistic" concept. In paleo-Turkic inscriptions Erlik is the God of Death; cf. Annemarie von Gabain, "Inhalt und magische Bedeutung der alttürkischen Inschriften" (*Anthropos* 48 [1953]: 537–56).

64. Cf. Bianchi, *Il dualismo religioso,* pp. 183–85.

65. Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* 1:70–71, following Potanin; Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen,* p. 94 (same source); cf. also Schmidt, *Ursprung* 12: 19–20.

motif, but the actors who perform it differ in each instance: a white swan (Lebed Tatars), the second "duck" (Abakan), the "man" in the shape of a black goose (Altai), the "man" (Altai-Kizil). There are differences, too, in the respective "positions" of God and his Adversary: the latter arrives after the Creation (Lebed); he is created by God (= Duck), whom he helps to make the World (Abakan); he is present beside God in the shape of a black goose (Altai); he knows where to find the substance needed to make the World (Altai-Kizil). The Adversary tries in vain to effect a parallel Creation, but only succeeds in devastating or ruining the Creation of God (marshes, mountains; underworlds). He is the Evil One, but also the King of the Dead (Abakan, Altai, Altai-Kizil). In all the variants it is always God who orders the cosmogonic dive, whether he addresses his command to birds, or to his "companion" (the second duck; the "man"), or to the unknown being whom he encounters (the "man"; Altai-Kizil). And it is God alone who possesses the cosmogonic power: he creates the World from a fragment. In the Altai-Kizil myth God does not know where the primal substance is to be found, and it is the "man" who tells him. But this motif occurs only rarely.

Among the Mongols the variants are still more complex. Očirvani and Tšagan-Šukurty descend from the Sky onto the primordial sea. Očirvani asks Tšagan-Šukurty to dive and bring him back some clay. After spreading the clay on a turtle they both fall asleep. Šulmus, the Devil, arrives and tries to drown them, with the familiar result: the Earth increases vastly in extent.[66] According to another variant, Očurman, who lives in the Sky, wants to create the Earth and looks for a companion. He finds him in Tšagan-Šukurty, and sends him to fetch silt in his name. But Tšagan-Šukurty becomes filled with pride: "Without me, you would not have obtained silt!" he cries, and then the substance slips through his fingers. Diving again, he takes silt in the name of Očurman. After the Creation Šulmus makes his appearance and asks for a share of the Earth, just as much as he can touch with the point of his stick. Šulmus strikes the ground with his stick, and snakes appear.[67]

66. Schmidt, *Ursprung* 12: 24, following Potanin. Cf. also ibid. 10 (1952): 53.

We can take the appearance of the snakes to be a "dualistic" modification of an earlier theme: the hole through which the God of Death descends underground. As Ugo Bianchi has already noted,[68] in this last Mongol myth we have two versions of the Evil One: the jealous, proud collaborator (Tšagan-Šukurty) and the destructive adversary (Šulmus). The myth unites or juxtaposes two different dualistic motifs: (1) the identification of the rival-adversary with the protagonist of the dive; (2) the evil one who arrives from no one knows where when the Earth has already been created and demands a portion of it or tries to ruin it.

BURIATS, YAKUTS

The Buriats have several variants of the myth, some of them markedly different. One legend introduces Sombol-Burkhan standing on the primordial Waters. He saw a bird swimming with its twelve chicks. "Bird, dive into the depths and bring me earth, black earth in your beak and red earth in your feet." Having received the two substances, he sowed them on the Waters, and thus the World came into existence.[69] According to another variant, the water birds dive at the command of God (Burkhan) and bring him red earth. God creates the World, and subsequently man.[70] Sometimes three divinities take part—Essexe Burkhan, Maidari-Burkhan, and Šibegeni-Burkhan;[71] they send a water bird to fetch

67. Schmidt, ibid. 12: 25–26, following Potanin. Cf. also ibid. 10: 53–54. It is well known that the cosmology and mythology of the Mongols were strongly influenced by Buddhism and Indian speculation (Očirvani= Vajrapani). Hence the survival of the motif of the cosmogonic dive is all the more noteworthy.

68. Bianchi, *Il dualismo religioso,* p. 162.

69. Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen,* p. 104; Schmidt, *Ursprung* 10: 205–6.

70. Schmidt, *Ursprung* 12, following A. Bastian. Cf. also Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen,* p. 104.

71. Essexe Burkhan is doubtless Esege Malan, the Supreme Being of the Buriats. Maidari=Maitreya, and Šibegeni=Sakyamuni. On Buddhist influences in central and northern Asia cf. M. Eliade, *Le chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase* (Paris, 1951), pp. 430 ff. (2d ed., 1968, pp. 385 ff.; English translation, by Willard R. Trask, *Shamanism: Archaic*

them clay, from which they create the World. The three gods then create the first human couple.[72]

Some variants add a dramatic episode to the dive: descending into the depths, the water bird comes upon a crayfish that asks where it is going. When it learns the reason, the crayfish becomes angry. "I always live in the water, yet I have never seen the bottom," it cries and threatens to tear the bird to pieces with its claws. But Sombol-Burkhan gives the bird a magic formula that enables it to reach the bottom of the sea.[73]

The Buriats who live in the Alarsk district have a myth that resembles the one known to the Altai-Kizil. Burkhan comes down from the Sky to create the World. Šolmo, the Devil, tells him where earth is to be found. God sends him to fetch some and sows it on the sea, saying: "Let the Earth be!" Šolmo demands enough earth to put his stick in, and from the hole come all kinds of reptiles and noxious animals.[74]

Although they now live farther to the east and the north than all the other Turkic peoples, the Yakuts have the myth in strongly Christianized variants, which are rather closer to the Russian and southeastern European forms. According to a version published by Priklonsky, in the beginning there was only the Waters. The Supreme Being, Yürün ajy-tojon (The White Creator Lord) saw a bubble on the water and asked it: "Who are you and whence do you

Techniques of Ecstasy [New York, 1964], pp. 495 ff.). The name Burkhan (Burkan, Burchan) designates "God" in central Asia. Cf. Schmidt, *Ursprung* 10: 573 ff.; Dominik Schröder, "Zur religion der Tujen des Sininggebietes" (*Anthropos* 48 [1953]: 202–59), p. 203.

72. Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen*, p. 104; Schmidt, *Ursprung* 12: 27 ff. (following Klementz).

73. Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen*, pp. 105 ff. Among the Votiak of the Sarapul region the Devil, on his dive to bring God mud, meets a crayfish. The crayfish tells him that it has never seen any earth, though it has lived in the sea for 120 years; Harva, p. 106. Harva rightly observes that in this legend the Devil has replaced the original diver, a water bird.

74. Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen*, p. 94; Schmidt, *Ursprung* 12: 28–29. In another variant, the Devil hides some mud under his heel, intending to use it to make mountains; Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen*, p. 98; Schmidt, *Ursprung* 12: 29.

come?" The bubble answered that it was Satan and lived on the earth that is at the bottom of the Waters. God said: "If there is really earth under the waters, bring me a piece of it!" Satan dived. God blessed the piece of earth and sat down on it. Satan tried to drown him and began pulling at the Earth, but it only became firmer and wider.[75]

In a variant collected by Sieroszewski, Christ appears with his elder brother Satan. "You boast that you can do everything and think you are more powerful than I. Then bring me a little sand from the bottom of the sea!" Satan dived twice, but the sand slipped through his fingers. The third time, turning into a swallow, he succeeded in bringing back a little mud in his beak. Christ blessed it and made the Earth, smooth and flat as a plate. But Satan had hidden a little of the mud. Christ discovered the trick and struck him on the back of the neck. He spat, and the mountains appeared.[76]

Finally, in a northern Yakut version the role of God is played by the "Mother of God." Wanting to make the World, she created two water birds, a red-throated diver and a wild duck, to bring her mud from the bottom of the Waters. But only the duck brought any. The diver claimed to have found nothing, and the "Mother of God" condemned it thenceforth to dive for its food. Then she made the Earth.[77]

This last version is the only one in which the dive is performed by water birds, a feature that may reflect the pre-Christian myth. The two other variants are strongly Christianized. (However, it is worth noting that in the second variant the Devil changes into a swallow in order to bring up mud.) The adversary of God (Christ) is no

75. Schmidt, *Ursprung* 11: 57, following V. L. Priklonsky ("Trigoda o Jakutskoi oblasti," *Živaja Starina* 4 [1891]: 43–66), p. 66.

76. V. L. Sieroszewski, *Yakuty* (Saint Petersburg, 1896), p. 653, summarized in Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen*, pp. 92–93, and Schmidt, *Ursprung* 11: 57–58 and 12: 34.

77. Tretyakov, summarized by Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen*, p. 105, and Schmidt, *Ursprung* 11: 58. See other variants in Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* 1:70, Feldmann, *Paradies u. Sündenfall*, p. 375; Schmidt, *Ursprung* 11: 58–59; ibid. 12: 35.

longer the Evil One, the Lord of Death (Erlik Khan, the "man," Ngaa, etc.), but Satan.

The red-throated diver also appears in a myth of the Yeniseians: the great shaman Doh was flying over the Waters in company with swans, red-throated divers, and other water birds. Finding no place to rest, he sent the red-throated diver to fetch him earth from the bottom of the sea. On its third dive the bird succeeded in bringing up a little earth in its beak, and Doh made an island from it.[78]

Birds, and especially water birds, play an important part in the mythologies of northern and central Asia. Epiphanies of God, the Demiurge, or the Mythical Ancestor, they appear "in the beginning," and their appearance presages a creation, or a change in the structure of the World, or the establishment of a people or a dynasty. In a cosmogonic myth whose area of dissemination extends beyond Siberia and central Asia, the World is hatched from an egg floating on the primordial Ocean. Siberian shamans' costumes have an ornithomorphic symbolism that is often pronounced: in his ecstasy the shaman is believed to be able to fly through the air or to dive into the depths of the ocean.[79] As we shall see further on, diving birds also occur in North American cosmogonies; sometimes they are even of the same species as the diving birds in northern Asian myths. In addition, the theme of the cosmogonic dive is also found in the mythologies of India and Indonesia, though there the diving is not done by birds but by amphibious animals. This wide dissemination raises problems that we shall discuss later. But it is only in Eurasia that the cosmogonic dive involves a hostile protagonist, an adversary of God; in other words, only in Eurasia has the theme been developed "dualistically." The origin of this development demands investigation.

IRAN

As we have seen, the first scholars who studied our myth looked to the classic home of dualism, Iran, for its origin. But the motif of

78. Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen,* pp. 103–4.

79. Cf. Eliade, *Le chamanisme,* pp. 149 ff. (2d ed., pp. 136 ff.; English translation, pp. 156 ff.).

the cosmogonic dive is not documented in Iran. Hence, if it is an Iranian creation, it must have taken place outside Iran, in a syncretistic milieu. Iranian religious ideas and cosmological concepts were disseminated both toward northwestern India and Tibet and toward central Asia and Siberia. However, not all of these ideas and beliefs were "dualistic" (cf. the myths, symbols, and rituals related to the cult of Mithra, or of the Cosmocrator-Savior, or of the "man of light," etc.). We had occasion earlier to point out certain influences on the mythologies of the Mongols and the Buriats (cf. also Kurbystan=Ohrmazd, among the Altaian Tatars). Let us see if, despite the absence of the theme of the cosmogonic dive there, we cannot find in Iran at least some of its constituent elements.

It appears that at least two of the constituent motifs of our myths are documented in Iranian traditions that are generally held to be Zervanite. The first motif parallels the sudden mental inertia that afflicts God in the Balkan legends. According to Eznik, whose account is confirmed by other sources, after Ohrmazd created the World he did not know how to make the Sun and Moon. But Ahriman knew, and he told the demons: Ohrmazd must lie with his mother to make the Sun, and with his sister to make the Moon. A demon hurried to tell Ohrmazd the formula.[80] No Zoroastrian text mentions this episode, although incest was encouraged by the Zoroastrian priesthood, who justified it by attributing it to Ohrmazd.[81] But what is of significance for our investigation is not incest as a means of creation; it is the theme of the Creator's inability to complete his work and his need to obtain help in it from his adversary, a demonic being. The fact that Eznik uses the motif for polemic purposes does not necessarily cast doubt on its authenticity. In all probability it represents a non-Zoroastrian tradition preserved as folklore.

80. Eznik, *Against the Sects,* book 2, chap. 8, text translated in R. C. Zaehner, *Zurvan. A Zoroastrian Dilemma* (Oxford, 1955), pp. 438–39; cf. ibid., pp. 435–36, a fragment of the *Acts of Anâhīdh,* in which the myth continues as follows: Ahriman was threatening to ruin the Earth by means of a toad that had absorbed the Waters. An Ahrimanic being, the fly, by stinging the toad's nose, forces it to vomit up the accumulated Waters.

81. Cf. Zaehner, *Zurvan,* pp. 151 ff. Ohrmazd's "cosmogonic" incest has its counterpart in a Mandaean tradition; Zaehner, ibid., pp. 152 ff.

The second constituent motif of our myth that can be referred to an Iranian source is the bond of brotherhood between God (Christ) and Satan. We have seen this documented in the Cheremis myth (where Keremet is God's brother), the Yakut myth (Satan, the elder brother), the Russian story in which Satan offers to be God's elder brother, the Russian variant from Tver, according to which neither God nor Satan was created, and the Mordvinian and Gypsy variants, which emphasize God's solitude and his desire to have a brother or a companion. Now according to Euthymius Zigabenus, there was a Bogomil belief that Satanael was the first-born son of God and Christ the second.[82] The belief in the equality, and even the "consanguinity," of Christ and Satan was also held by the Ebionites,[83] which justifies the supposition that such a belief could well have circulated in a Judeo-Christian milieu. The idea that, from the very beginning, God established a good principle and an evil principle, surrendering the present age to the Angel of Darkness and reserving the future age for the Angel of Truth, is already familiar to the Essenes;[84] but there is no doubt that it is due to an Iranian influence.[85]

82. Euthymius Zigabenus, *Panoplia Dogmatica* (*Patr. Graeca,* vol. 130), col. 1290. John the Exarch already knew this tradition at the beginning of the tenth century (cf. Obolensky, *The Bogomils,* p. 122). Its popularity among the Bogomils is confirmed by a certain number of apocrypha and literary texts of the sect (ibid., p. 186).

83. Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30: 16.

84. *Manual of Discipline* (= *The Roll of the Rule*) 3: 20; 4: 16–20; cf. A. Dupont-Sommer, *Les Écrits esséniens découverts près de la mer Morte* (Paris, 1959), pp. 94, 96. Father Jean Daniélou, *Théologie du judéo-christianisme* 1 (Paris, 1958): 69, has already compared these Ebionite ideas to the Essene doctrine.

85. Dupont-Sommer, *Les Écrits esséniens,* p. 93, n. 2, and *Nouveaux aperçus sur les manuscrits de la mer Morte* (Paris, 1958), pp. 157–72. Cf. also H. Michaud, "Un mythe zervanite dans un des manuscrits de Qumrān" (*Vetus Testamentum* 5 [1955]: 137–47); J. Duchesne-Guillemin, "Le zervanisme et les manuscrits de la mer Morte" (*Indo-Iranian Journal* 1 [1957]: 96–99): Duchesne-Guillemin, *The Western Response to Zoroaster* (Oxford, 1958), pp. 94 ff. For Iranian influences on late Judaism cf. G. Widengren, "Stand und Aufgaben der iranischen Religionsgeschichte," 2 (*Numen* 2 [1955]: 47–134), pp. 109 ff.; Widengren, "Quelques rapports entre Juifs et Iraniens à l'époque des Parthes" (*Vetus Testamentum,* Supplement, 4 [Leiden, 1957]: 157–241); Widengren, *Iranisch-semitische Kulturbegegnung in parthischer Zeit* (Cologne and Opladen, 1960), especially pp. 51 ff., 62 ff.

Like the Bogomil traditions to which we have referred, our myths can be compared to a Zervanite myth (reported, among others, by Eznik and Theodore bar Konai), which explains the birth of Ahriman and Ohrmazd. When nothing yet existed, Zurvan had offered a sacrifice for a thousand years in order to have a son. And because he had doubted the efficacy of his sacrifice (Eznik: "What use can the sacrifice I am offering be?"), he conceived two sons: Ohrmazd "by virtue of the offered sacrifice" and Ahriman "by virtue of his doubt." Zurvan decided to make the first-born son king. Ohrmazd knew what his father was thinking and revealed it to Ahriman. The latter tore his mother's belly[86] and came out. But when he told Zurvan that he was his son, Zurvan answered: "My son is sweet-smelling and luminous, and you are dark and stinking." Then Ohrmazd was born, "luminous and sweet-smelling," and Zurvan wanted to anoint him king. But Ahriman reminded him of his vow to make his first-born son king. Not to break his oath, Zurvan conferred royalty on him for nine thousand years, after which Ohrmazd would reign. Then, Eznik continues, Ohrmazd and Ahriman "fell to making creatures. And everything that Ohrmazd created was good and straight, and what Ahriman made was evil and crooked."[87] We should note that both gods are creators, though all that Ahriman created was evil. Now this negative contribution to the cosmogony (mountains, marshes, snakes, noxious animals, etc.) is an essential element in the myths of the cosmogonic dive in which the Adversary of God plays a part.

86. Eznik rightly understood that Zurvan was a hermaphrodite. But other authors refer to Zurvan's "mother" (Theodore bar Kônai, Yohannân bar Penkayê) or his "wife" (Theodore Abū Qurra), cf. Zaehner, *Zurvan,* pp. 63 ff., 423, 428.

87. See the texts reproduced in Bidez-Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés* (Paris, 1938) 2: 89–92, and in Zaehner, *Zurvan,* pp. 421 ff., and the discussion of them, ibid., pp. 54 ff. This myth was recently discussed by M. Molé, "Le problème zurvanite" (*Journal asiatique* 247 [1959]: 431–70), pp. 459 ff., and by G. Widengren, "Das Prinzip des Bösen in den Östlichen Religion" (in *Das Böse, Studien aus dem C. G. Jung-Institut,* Band 13 [Zürich, 1961]: 25–61), pp. 45 ff.

"By the performance of sacrifice all creation was created," says the *Greater Bundahišn* (3. 20; Zaehner, *Zurvan,* p. 336). As Widengren has pointed out,[88] Zurvan's sacrifice is comparable to Prajāpati's in the Brāhmaṇas, and his doubt—with its disastrous consequences—constitutes a ritual error. Evil is the result of a technical accident, of a lapse on the part of the divine sacrificer. The Evil One does not possess an ontological status of his own; he is dependent upon his involuntary author, who limits the term of his existence beforehand. Later writers (Šahristānī, Murtazā Rāzī, Mas'ūdī) also mention the opinions of the Zurvaniyya and other sectarians, who tried to explain Ahriman either as derived from a wicked thought in the mind of God (Zurvan) or by affirming that there was always something evil in God.[89] Zurvan would be preeminently the "divine totality," the *coincidentia oppositorum* whose androgynism is but one of its aspects.

We cannot here enter into the considerable problem of the relations between so-called Zervanite ideas and Mazdaism. It would be of consequence to know if Iranian scholars are in agreement that "the *Gāthās* do not *a priori* reject the idea that the Spirit of Good and the Spirit of Evil may have the same origin" (Molé, "Le problème zurvanite," p. 460). But for the purpose of this study we must recall (1) that consanguinity between the representatives of Good and Evil is a theme documented elsewhere and especially in Christian religious folklore,[90] and (2) that this concept has a "prehistory" documented both in Indian speculations on the consanguinity between *devas* and *asuras* and in more archaic beliefs concerning the divine biunity.[91] We shall later estimate the importance of these archaic beliefs for an understanding of our myth.

88. Widengren, *Religionens värld* (2d ed., Stockholm, 1953), p. 71; Widengren, "Das Prinzip des Bösen," pp. 46 ff.

89. See the texts in Zaehner, *Zurvan,* pp. 433 ff., 443, 451; cf. also U. Bianchi, *Zamān i Ohrmazd* (Turin, 1958), pp. 157 ff.; Molé, "Le problème zurvanite," pp. 462 ff.

90. Cf., for example, the cycle of legends crystallized around the struggle between a saint and his sister, a demoness, who steals and kills children. See M. Eliade, "Notes de démonologie" (*Zalmoxis* 1 [1938]: 197–203).

91. Cf. M. Eliade, "La coincidentia oppositorum et le mystère de la totalité" (*Eranos-Jahrbuch* 27 [Zürich, 1959]: 195–236), reprinted in *Mephistophélès et l'Androgyne* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), pp. 95–154.

To sum up, the Iranian parallels discoverable in our cosmogonic myths prove to be as follows: (1) The Zervanite concept of the brotherhood between Ohrmazd and Ahriman is found in the versions that emphasize the consanguinity or the friendship between God (Christ) and the Devil; a number of these versions are documented in central and northern Asia (see above, pp. 97, 104), which seems to exclude a Bogomil origin; (2) Ohrmazd's inability to create the Sun and Moon resembles the postcosmogonic mental inertia of God in certain Balkan legends. But in some Russian, central Asian, and Siberian variants, the Devil's knowledge is still greater: he knows where to find the substance needed for the Creation (cf., above, the Great Russian, Vogul, Altai-Kizil, Buriat, and Yakut legends). This mythical motif does not appear to derive from an Iranian model.

A third parallel may be suggested: the motif of the contract between God and Satan. We cited above (p. 82, n. 13) a Bulgarian legend in which Satan is born from God's shadow (though at God's command) and proposes to share the Universe with him. Šahristānī cites a tradition according to which the Devil obtains from Ohrmazd the right to do evil and signs a pact to that effect before two witnesses.[92] This is not necessarily a Zervanite idea. The notion of a contract between Ohrmazd and Ahriman is already implicit in the arrangement that allots nine thousand years to the rule of the latter.[93]

What conclusion can we draw at this point in our investigation? The two—or three—motifs we have just examined can be related to syncretistic Iranian traditions, probably "Zervanite" in origin. In certain variants of our myth the figure of the Devil is reminiscent of the Prince of this World as he appears in Gnostico-Manichaean speculations. Probably Iranian influences contributed to give our myth its present aspect. But it is equally probable that these influences often only accentuated and added a dualistic dimension to an already existing religious concept in which the

92. Text in Zaehner, *Zurvan,* p. 434. See p. 451, a passage from Murtazā Rāzi, which relates that when Yazdān (God) and Ahriman made peace they entrusted their swords to the Moon. If either of them broke the treaty before the specified time, he was to be killed with his own sword.

93. See also Bianchi, *Zamān i Ohrmazd,* pp. 95 ff.

antagonism and tension between polar figures played an essential part. We will return to this problem when we attempt to reconstruct the process by which the original scenario of the cosmogonic dive was transformed into such a myth as we have been considering, whose structure is determined by the presence of two antagonistic Supernatural Beings. But we must first cite some variants recorded outside of the "dualistic" area.

NORTH AMERICAN COSMOGONIES

Dähnhardt had already drawn attention to a certain number of American myths.[94] A typical example is furnished by the Mandans. Before the Earth existed the Master of Life created the first man. The first man came upon a diver or a duck and said to it: "You dive so well, dive into the depths and bring me back a little earth." The man spread it on the Waters, uttered a formula, and created the Earth.[95] Usually, however, it is the Creator or a Divine Being who sends various animals to dive.

The myth is found over a great part of North America,[96] especially in the forest regions of the North and the East, among the Algonquins, the Athapascans, and the Iroquois. It is also frequent in the Plains region, even as far as the Shoshoni, the Arapaho, and the Iowa. It is unknown among the Eskimos and among most of the tribes of the Northwest Coast. (However, it has been recorded from a Kwakiutl tribe, on Vancouver Island, and from the Kaphlamet, a Chinook tribe in Oregon.) In California the motif is found in the traditions of several peoples: Wintun, Maidu, Miwok, Yokut, Mono, and Salina. In the Pueblo region and the southern prairies the myth is unknown.[97] Dähnhardt and, after him, Uno Harva believed that they found the cosmogonic dive in the myths

94. O. Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* 1: 75–88.

95. Maximilian, Prinz zu Wied, *Reise in das Innere von Nordamerika* 2 (Coblenz, 1839–41): 152, cited by Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* 1: 75.

96. Cf. James Teit, "Kaska Tales" (*Journal of American Folklore* 30 [1917]: 427–73), pp. 427 ff.; Gladys A. Reichard, "Literary Types and Dissemination of Myths" (ibid., 34 [1921]: 269–307), pp. 269 ff.; Stith Thompson, *Tales of the North American Indians* (Cambridge, Mass., 1929), p. 279, n. 30.

97. Cf. Gudmund Hatt, *Asiatic Influences in American Folklore* (Copenhagen, 1949), pp. 14–15.

of two tribes of southern Brazil, the Kaingang and the Are, but these are really deluge myths.[98]

The diving animals are birds,[99] especially the diving duck,[100] in two cases (Yokut and Wintu) the rail,[101] the redheaded duck (associated with the turtle among the northern Arapaho),[102] but also, and in considerable numbers, swimming quadrupeds,[103] crustaceans (Yuchi),[104] insects (Cherokee),[105] and fish (an Iroquois myth).[106] In certain cases, as in the cosmogonic myth that forms part of the Arapaho Sun Dance, the Supreme Being and the Ancestor, both changed into ducks, dive together.[107]

98. Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* 1: 87; Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen*, p. 107. Cf. Hatt, *Asiatic Influences*, p. 15, n. 1, who also quotes P. Ehrenreich's conclusion: "Die in Nordamerika so gewöhnliche Vorstellung von einem Urwasser, aus dem die Erde durch Tiere herausgefischt wird, scheint in Südamerika zu fehlen" (*Die Mythen und Legenden der Südamerikanischen Urvölker und ihre Beziehungen zu denen Nordamerikas und der alten Welt* [Berlin, 1905], p. 29). However, we should add that in North America too the myth of the cosmogonic dive sometimes forms part of deluge myths. Contamination of the two motifs is especially frequent among the Algonquin tribes; cf. some examples in H. B. Alexander, *North American Mythology* (= *The Mythology of All Races* 10) (Boston, 1916): 42 ff.; Sir James George Frazer, *Folk-lore in the Old Testament* 1 (London, 1919): 295 ff. There is obviously a structural similarity between myths of the flood and aquatic cosmogonies: the flood restores the Chaos that preceded the creation; the surviving couple who, after many vicissitudes, find a piece of firm ground is homologable with the First Couple.

99. Some bibliographical references in Hatt, *Asiatic Influences*, p. 14, n. 3.

100. See the examples cited by Schmidt in *Ursprung* 2: 262 (Miwok), 274 (Yokuts, cf. also 5: 301), 288 ff. (Salina), 423 (Lenape), 673 ff. (Atsina), 685 ff. (Arapaho), 759 (Cheyenne).

101. Examples in Schmidt, ibid. 2: 278; 5: 207.

102. Cf. ibid. 2: 688.

103. Cf. Hatt, *Asiatic Influences*, p. 14, n. 3.

104. Ibid., p. 14, n. 4.

105. Ibid., n. 5, citing James Mooney, *Myth of the Cherokee* (Washington, 1900), p. 239.

106. Dähnhardt, *Natursagen* 1: 85.

107. An analysis of this myth will be found in Schmidt, *Ursprung* 2: 700, 715 ff.

A common characteristic of all these myths is that there is neither conflict nor opposition between the diving animals and the figure who creates the Earth.[108] This is the more surprising because North America is a region in which a variety of "dualistic" concepts developed.[109] Indeed, the dualistic element is found even in certain cosmogonic myths. We need only recall the central theme of the Californian cosmogonies, which center on the conflict between the Creator and Coyote. The Creator wanted to make the World a paradise and man immortal; Coyote brings death and ruins the Earth by producing mountains, destroying foodstuffs, and so on. But Coyote has no role in the cosmogonic dive.[110] As we shall soon see, the absence of the dualistic element is decisive for the chronology of the various forms of this myth.

108. Schmidt observes that, in contrast to the northern Asian myths, the North American myths emphasize the extreme depth of the ocean (cf. *Ursprung* 6: 40–41). The dive sometimes takes six years (as in a myth of the Maidu of the Northwest; cf. ibid. 2: 110), and the incidents of the submarine journey are recounted in great detail; cf. the myths of the Yokuts (ibid. 2: 273 ff.), the Salina (ibid. 2: 288 ff.), the Blackfeet (ibid. 2: 665), the Gros Ventre (2: 674), the Arapaho (2: 685, 688, 692 ff., 887), the Cheyenne (2: 759). But see also the myths of the Samoyeds (ibid. 3: 352) and the Voguls (Feldmann, *Paradies u. Sündenfall*, p. 381).

109. Some of these concepts are discussed by Bianchi, *Il dualismo religioso*, pp. 69 ff.

110. Dähnhardt compared a myth common among the Algonquins and the Iroquois (twins quarreling in their mother's womb, and one emerging through her side) with the Iranian tradition of the prenatal quarrel between Ohrmazd and Ahriman, and concluded that the American myth was of Iranian origin (*Natursagen* 1: 10–11, 79). The conclusion is not convincing: the distance between Iran and the Eastern Forest region of North America is great, and the myth is found nowhere between those two points (cf. also Hatt, *Asiatic Influences*, p. 22). As a parallel to the Transylvanian Gypsy legend (see above, p. 79), in which the stick God threw into the water changes into a tree and from the trunk of the tree the Devil emerges, Schmidt cites the following myth of the Wawenock (Algonquins of the Northwest): the Civilizing Hero Gluskabe created himself from a piece of earth that was left over after the Creator had formed the first human beings (see *Ursprung* 6: 39–40). Cf. also the Koryak myth about the origin of the Crow, formed from the dust produced when the Supreme Being sharpened his knife (ibid. 3: 403). The underlying idea is the same: the substance produced or used by God for his work of creation is capable of giving birth to Beings who later attack the Creation and even the Creator.

ARYAN INDIA

In India the myth of the cosmogonic dive developed in an entirely different direction. The diving animal is a boar: it descends to the bottom of the Waters and brings up the Earth. But the identity of the cosmogonic boar was variously interpreted in the course of the ages. The *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* (7. 1. 5. 1 f.) presents the exemplary image of the primordial Waters, with Prajāpati moving over them like the wind. He saw the Earth, and, changing into a boar, descended to the depths and brought it up. The *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (1. 1. 3. 5 f.) gives more details: in the beginning, when only the Waters existed, Prajāpati saw a lotus leaf and thought: "There is something on which it rests." He assumed the form of a boar, dived, and found earth. Taking a little of it, he returned to the surface and spread it over the lotus leaf. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (14. 1. 2. 11) adds the important detail that a boar named Emūṣa brought up the Earth.

Now the boar Emūṣa is already documented in the *Ṛg-Veda* (1. 61. 7; 8. 77. 10), where it is said to guard a hundred buffaloes and a dish of rice from the farther side of a mountain. Indra shoots an arrow, which passes through the mountain and kills the boar. The name *emūṣa* is certainly not Aryan but, according to Kuiper, is Austro-Asiatic. Kuiper has shown that the myth occurs only in the hymns of the Kāṇva family.[111] This name is not Aryan, and Hillebrandt thought that the Kāṇva family did not belong to the elite of the Vedic priestly families.[112] Probably the family was less well acquainted with Aryan traditions[113] but, instead, had access to the pre-Aryan Muṇḍa or proto-Muṇḍa mythological store.

Kuiper holds that, originally, the boar of the cosmogonic myth

111. F. B. J. Kuiper, "An Austro-Asiatic Myth in the Rig-Veda" (*Mededelingen der koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen* [Amsterdam, new series, 13, 7, 1950]: 163–82), p. 173.

112. Cf. Alfred Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* 2 (2d ed.; Breslau, 1927–29): 58, n. 3; 256, 426, n. 2.

113. Cf. Kuiper, "An Austro-Asiatic Myth," p. 179.

had nothing to do with the *emūṣa* of the *Ṛg-Veda*.[114] We do not agree with him in this opinion. Gonda has adduced convincing arguments in support of the identity of the boar *emūṣa* in the two mythological complexes.[115] Hence we are justified in postulating a myth of the cosmogonic dive that, already known to the Austro-Asiatic peoples, was assimilated and developed by Brahmanism. For, as we have just seen, in the *Brāhmaṇas* it is Prajāpati who assumes the form of a boar in order to bring the Earth up from the depths of the primordial Waters. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* (2. 110. 3) the role is transferred to Brahmā. But in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (1. 4. 1 f.) the coalescence of Brahmā and Viṣṇu is already complete; Brahmā-Viṣṇu, in the shape of a boar, descends to the bottom of the ocean and brings up the Earth. In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (1. 3. 7) the boar is an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu.[116]

The fact that it is a Great God who dives in animal form is strong evidence for the archaism of the myth (indeed, the myth is not found among the pastoral peoples of central Asia). On the other hand, we must add that in the majority of the Indian versions the myth is not connected with the original Creation but with the recreation of the World after a "great dissolution." From one point of view these repetitions of the Creation can be compared to the myths of the Flood. But, as we have already pointed out (above, p. 113, n. 98), there is a structural similarity between the aquatic cosmogonies and the myths of the flood. For Indian thought, which

114. Ibid., pp. 177 ff. On the boar myth see also A. A. Macdonnell, in *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society* 28 [1895]: 178–89; Jarl Charpentier, *Kleine Beiträge zur indo-iranischen Mythologie* (Uppsala, 1911), pp. 49 ff.

115. J. Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism* (Utrecht, 1954), pp. 139 ff. It is certain that the boar plays an important role in the cultural complex of the archaic agricultural societies; cf. ibid., pp. 141 ff.

116. In a Ceylonese version it is Rāhu, the demon who causes eclipses, who asked Viṣṇu to place a lotus seed on the waves. When the seed sprouts Rāhu descends along the stem. The water was so deep that it took him four days to return to the surface (cf. H. Parker, *Village Folk-Tales of Ceylon* [3 vols; London, 1916–19], 1: 47 ff.). But there is probably a confusion between the demon Rāhu and the boar Raghu; cf. W. Ruben, *Ueber die Literatur der vorarischen Stämme Indiens* (Berlin: Deutsche Akad. d. Wissenschaften, Institut für Orientforsch., Veröff., 15, 1952), pp. 51 ff.

was averse to the idea of an absolute beginning in time, and which elaborated the doctrine of cosmic cycles in more than visionary terms, the cosmogony ended by being confused with each new beginning of the World.

The *varāha-avatāra* enjoyed great popularity in Hinduism. It was sometimes considered the most perfect incarnation of Viṣṇu and has never ceased to inspire Indian artists.[117] Considering that certain concepts and religious practices that have flourished in Hinduism seem to have their roots in the pre-Aryan substratum, the popularity of the *varāha-avatāra* could be explained by its pre-Aryan origin.

PRE-ARYAN INDIA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

And in fact the myth of the cosmogonic dive is documented among several aboriginal peoples, especially among the Muṇḍa tribes.[118] The Bihor of Chota Nagpur relate it as follows: The Supreme Spirit, Singbōngā, who was in the lower world, rose to the surface of the Waters through the hollow stem of a lotus. He sat down on the lotus flower and ordered the turtle to bring him a little mud from the bottom. The turtle obeyed, but during its return to the surface the mud dissolved. Singbōngā then ordered the crab to dive. The crab brought back some mud in its claws but, like the turtle, lost it on the way up. Finally Singbōngā sent the leech; it swallowed a little mud and regurgitated it into the hand of the Supreme Being, who made the Earth from it.[119] A similar myth is found among the Santali: Marang Buru sends the fish, the crab,

117. Cf. Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 140, n. 66.

118. A synoptic table of the variants of the myth in central and northern Asia, India, and Indochina will be found in L. Walk, "Die Verbreitung des Tauchmotifs in der Urmeerschöpfungs- (und Sintflut-) Sagen" (*Mitteilungen der anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 63 [1933]: 60–76). Cf. also R. H. Lowie, "Zur Verbreitung der Flutsagen" (*Anthropos* 21 [1926]: 615–16). The Indian variants are recorded in Stith Thompson and Jonas Balys, *Motif and Type Index of the Oral Tales of India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), pp. 15–16.

119. Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Roy, *The Bihors, a little known jungle-tribe of Chota Nagpur* (Ranchi, 1925), pp. 398–400; Hatt, *Asiatic Influences*, p. 25.

and the leech to dive.[120] The Muṇḍa relate the story in almost the same terms.[121] The myth also appears to have been known to the Savara (= Saora, a Muṇḍa tribe): The World had been submerged and everything had been destroyed except a couple who saved themselves in a gourd. Kittung (the Creator) had a rat, which brought earth from the bottom of the Ocean, and Kittung spread it on the water.[122]

The myth is also found among some of the peoples of Assam: the Garo, the Singpho, the Sema Naga, and so on. The Garo version is as follows: The god Tattaro-Rabuga, having decided to make the Earth, asked the goddess Nosta-Nōpantu to fulfill his wish. The goddess sent a big crab, but the water was too deep and the crab turned back. She then asked a small crab to dive. But the small crab became frightened and soon returned to the surface. Finally she sent a dung beetle, Chiching-Barching, and it brought up a little clay, from which Nosta-Nōpantu formed the Earth.[123] The Singpho relate that the gods Mutum and Muta came down from the Sky and took a handful of earth from under the Waters and made the Earth from it.[124] The Kachari (Sema Naga) tell of the

120. Sarat Chandra Mitra, "Schöpfungsmythe der Bihar und ihre Parallele bei den Santal und in Nordamerika" (*Anthropos* 26 [1931]: 599). Cf. another variant in Adolf Bastian, *Völkerstämme am Brahmaputra* (Berlin, 1883), p. 125, reprinted by Alfred Kühn, *Berichte über den Weltanfang bei den Indochinesen und ihren Nachbarvölkern* (Leipzig, 1935), pp. 24–25.

121. W. Schmidt, *Das Mutterrecht* (Vienna-Mödling, 1955), p. 40. Schmidt also cites Gond, Agori, and Bondo variants. Verrier Elwin, *The Baiga* (London, 1934), pp. 308–11, gives a long Baiga version of the myth in which the dive is performed by the rook (daughter of the Creator, Bhagavan) and the earthworm.

122. Verrier Elwin, *The Religion of an Indian Tribe* (Oxford, 1955), pp. 86–87.

123. A. Playfair, *The Garos* (London, 1909), pp. 82 ff.; cf. also Lowie, "Zur Verbreitung," pp. 615–16; Hatt, *Asiatic Influences*, p. 25; Kühn, *Berichte über den Weltanfang*, p. 24.

124. Ibid., p. 23 (No. 25).

crabs that brought the Creator the necessary mud.[125] Among the Shan of Burma, the divers are ants.[126]

Among the Semang Negritos of the Malay Peninsula, the Menik Kaien and Kintak Bong tribes believe that the Earth was brought up from the depths of the sea, in the form of powder, by the dung beetle Taheum. The bear Kapaw pressed it with its paw, otherwise the Earth would have continued to rise until it reached the Sky.[127] In this variant the insect seems not to have been sent by a divinity but to have dived on its own initiative. A similar myth has been recorded from the Kenta of the Malay Peninsula: In the beginning there was nothing but the Waters. Kaei, the Supreme Being, sat in the firmament; the Sun was beside him. From the depths of the Waters Tahoba (a dung beetle) brought a ball of earth. It soon began to grow, and so fast that if the bear had not pressed down on it there would be only mountains and no plains.[128]

The cosmic dive is known only sporadically in Indonesia and Micronesia. The Dyaks of northwestern Borneo tell of two Creator-Spirits that descend into the primitive Sea in the form of birds and bring back two lumps of earth the size of a hen's egg. One of the birds draws the Sky from its egg, and the other the Earth. But the Earth is too big, and the two Spirits have to compress it, thus giving

125. J. H. Hutton, *The Sema Nagas* (London, 1921), p. 380, n. 1; Kühn, *Berichte über den Weltanfang*, pp. 24–25 (No. 26).

126. Walk, "Die Verbreitung," pp. 65, 74.

127. Ivor H. N. Evans, *Studies in Religion, Folk-lore and Custom in British North Borneo and the Malay Peninsula* (Cambridge, 1923), p. 154; Evans, *The Negritos of Malaya* (Cambridge, 1927), pp. 159–60; Hatt, *Asiatic Influences*, p. 31; Kühn, *Berichte über den Weltanfang*, p. 25 (No. 31), cf. also Schmidt, *Ursprung* 3: 158 ff., 167; 6: 233.

128. P. Schebesta, *Bei den Urwaldzwergen von Malaya* (Leipzig, 1927), pp. 212–13, 242; Kühn, *Berichte über den Weltanfang*, p. 25 (No. 34); Hatt, *Asiatic Influences*, p. 31. The amazingly swift growth of the Earth is, it will be recalled, one of the characteristic features of the southeastern European and central Asian variants. Chinese cosmogonic traditions tell of "living land," that is, "land that grows by itself"; cf. H. Maspero, "Légendes mythologiques dans le Chou King" (*Journal asiatique* [1924], pp. 1–100), p. 47, n. 1.

birth to the mountains.[129] This last detail is reminiscent of some Balkan variants. But the myth shows contamination with a different theme: that of the cosmogonic egg.

In the traditions of the Toba-Batak of Sumatra a girl comes down from the Sky, sends a swallow to fetch clay, and molds the Earth from it.[130] According to another variant, a swallow and a big dung beetle bring a handful of earth from the Sky.[131] This last form is characteristic, for the celestial origin of the Earth is the dominant motif of the Indonesian and Micronesian cosmogonies.

In Melanesia the cosmogonic dive is known only in New Britain, among the coastal tribes of the Gazelle Peninsula. Two Civilizing Heroes, the brothers To-Kabinana and To-Karvuvu, fish the Earth from the depths of the sea. The same story, but with added details, circulates in the southern part of the New Hebrides.[132] In Micronesia the motif of the cosmogonic dive undergoes a process

129. W. Schmidt, *Grundlinien einer Vergleichung der Religion und Mythologie der austronesischen Völker* (Vienna, 1910), p. 7; Hatt, *Asiatic Influences*, p. 32.

130. Kühn, *Berichte über den Weltanfang*, p. 27, citing A. Bastian, *Die Denkschöpfung umgebender Welt aus kosmogonischen Vorstellungen in Kultur und Unkultur* (Berlin, 1896), pp. 11–12.

131. Kühn, *Berichte über den Weltanfang*, p. 26 (No. 36), following J. Warneck, *Studien über die Litteratur der Toba-Battak* (Berlin, 1899), pp. 123–24.

132. Ronald B. Dixon, *Oceanic Mythology* (= *The Mythology of all Races* 9 [Boston, 1916]), p. 105. In the Pintados Archipelago (in the Philippines) it is a sea eagle that brings mud from the bottom of the sea; cf. Walk, "Die Verbreitung," pp. 65, 74. Walk also gives a Gilbert Islands legend concerning the origin of Samoa, but the dive motif has almost disappeared. Na Arean (Lord Spider) summons his brothers, the Wave and the Octopus, and cries to them: "Octopus, go and put together sand and stones! Wave, wash the sand and the stones and put them together!" (Walk, pp. 63, 65, 74). A whole series of Oceanian myths tells of a giant fish brought from the bottom of the Ocean and chopped to pieces with knives; that is why the islands are rough and rugged, crossed by mountains (Dixon, *Oceanic Mythology*, pp. 43 ff.). In New Zealand and Hawaii the protagonist of fishing up the Earth in the shape of a gigantic fish is Maui; cf. the texts and commentaries in Katharine Luomala, *Maui-of-a-thousand-Tricks: His Oceanic and European Biographers* (Honolulu, 1949), pp. 45–47, and s.v. earth-fishing.

of erosion and contamination with other mythical motifs and ends by disappearing.[133]

To sum up: Whereas in the Hinduistic traditions a Great God dives in the shape of a boar, among the aboriginal peoples of India, Assam, and the Malay Peninsula the dive is ordered by a Creator-Being and performed by amphibious animals. Exceptionally (in a Semang version) the animals dive without having been ordered to do so by a Creator-Being. They dive three times, like the birds in some Siberian variants or the Devil in the legends of southeastern Europe.[134] The only instances in which amphibious animals are replaced by birds belong to a different geographical and cultural area (cf. the Dyak legend of the two Creator-Spirits diving in the form of birds, and, among the Toba-Batak, the swallow sent by the girl from the Sky).

ORIGIN AND DISSEMINATION OF THE MYTH

The problem of the origin and dissemination of this myth has aroused intense interest among scholars. Dähnhardt believed in an Iranian origin (*Natursagen* 1: 14 ff.). But we have seen that the

133. Traces of it are found among some tribes of northwestern Australia: the demiurge Woloro thrusts his hand into the Ocean and brings up a little soil; cf. H. Petri, *Sterbende Welt in Nordwest Australien* (Brunswick, 1954), p. 105.

134. The series of two unsuccessful attempts followed by a third that succeeds is also found in other types of creation myths. For example, among the Thai and the Chinese it is said that, the world being covered with water, the Lord Above sent three heroes in succession to prepare the Earth and make it habitable; cf. Henri Maspero, *Les Religions chinoises* (Paris, 1950), pp. 189 ff. (also, in condensed form, in his earlier article, "Légendes mythologiques dans le Chou-King," published in 1924). According to a Moslem tradition, transmitted by Tabarī, Allah had sent the angel Gabriel down to Earth to gather the handful of dust necessary for the Creation of man. But, in accordance with the insidious advice of the Devil (= Iblis), the Earth refused. The second messenger, Michael, was no more successful. But the third, 'Azrā'il, disregarded the Earth's challenge and brought back the dust that God needed. In recompense Allah appointed 'Azrā'il the Angel of Death; it is he who seizes the souls of the dead; cf. Tabarī, *Annals*, ed. de Goeje, 1: 87; quoted by H. Schwarzbaum, "The Overcrowded Earth" (*Numen* 4 [1957]: 59–74), p. 64.

myth is not documented in Iran. Uno Harva thought of India, where the earliest written documents that clearly refer to the cosmogonic dive are found.[135] The two scholars explained the North American versions by the dissemination of the Asian myth in its "dualistic" form; hence the dissemination must have taken place comparatively recently (perhaps during the Middle Ages?). But this explanation encounters insurmountable difficulties. For, on the one hand, the American myth of the cosmogonic dive never includes the dualistic element, which is so characteristic of the variants from southeastern Europe and central Asia. What possible explanation is there for the fact that, in passing from northern Asia to North America, the myth lost precisely the element that, *a priori,* ought to have been in the highest degree interesting to peoples intensely concerned with the "dualistic" problem, especially as manifested in the antagonism between the Creator and Coyote? On the other hand, the myth is found among archaic ethnic groups (Yuki, Maidu, etc.), where recent Asian influences are entirely lacking.[136]

Though also accepting the Asian origin of the North American versions, Wilhelm Schmidt proposed an entirely different chronology. For the learned author of the *Ursprung der Gottesidee,* the dissemination must have taken place at a very distant period, for the following reason: Certain North American ethnic groups that possess the myth of the cosmogonic dive represent an *Urkultur* (that is, a culture of nomadic hunters), whereas in central and northern Asia the myth was an integral part of the religious traditions of the pastoral peoples, who belong to a younger culture (*Primärkultur*). Considering that domestication was unknown in North America, the myth must have arrived with the first waves of

135. Cf. *Die religiösen Vorstellungen der altaischen Völker,* p. 108; id. [= Uno Holmberg], *Finno-Ugric, Siberian Mythology* (= *The Mythology of All Races* 4 [Boston, 1927]), pp. 328, 331.

136. In a recent article Earl W. Count accepts in principle the Dähnhardt-Harva hypothesis that the North American myths are of comparatively recent origin; "The Earth-Diver and the Rival Twins: A Clue to Time Correlations in North-Eurasiatic and North American Mythology" (*Selected Papers of the XXIXth International Congress of Americanists,* edited by Sol Tax 3 [Chicago, 1952]: 55–62).

northern Asia peoples, who did not know domestication. These peoples, still in the hunting and gathering stage, would have crossed from Asia to North America before the disappearance of the Bering Isthmus (that is, ca. 25,000 to 15,000 years before our era).

On the other hand, Schmidt also maintained the northern Asian origin of the Austro-Asiatic peoples, and especially of the aboriginal tribes of India and Indochina, among which the cosmogonic dive is documented.[137] According to Schmidt, the myth formed part of the patrimony common to the Paleolithic peoples of northern Asia; from there it was disseminated to the south with the Austro-Asiatics, and to America, before the Bering Isthmus was broken, with the ancestors of the Maidu, the Patwin, the Wintu, and so on.[138]

Paleoethnologists and ethnologists are the proper judges of the validity of this hypothesis. We may note, however, that Schmidt attached exaggerated importance to the disappearance of the Bering Isthmus for the chronology of North American cultural traditions. Communications between the two continents continued almost uninterrupted, and Asian influences continued to be exerted during the Neolithic period and even later, during the Age of Metals.[139]

Wilhelm Schmidt's hypothesis has recently been modified by one of his most brilliant disciples, Professor Josef Haekel. This scholar sets out from Schmidt's observation that there must have been historical connections between the two important groups in which the myth of the dive is documented, more particularly the tribes

137. But Hermann Baumann has observed that the myth is not known to the Austro-Asians properly speaking but only to the Gonds, the Muṇḍa, and other peoples improperly termed "Austro-Asiatic" by Schmidt; cf. "P. Wilhelm Schmidt und das Mutterrecht" (*Anthropos* 53 [1958]: 212–28), p. 215.

138. Schmidt, *Ursprung* 6: 40ff., 233; 12: 166 ff.; id. *Das Mutterrecht,* pp. 40ff.

139. Cf., for example, Josef Haekel, "Kosmischer Baum und Pfahl in Mythus und Kult der Stämme Nordwestamerikas" (*Wiener Völkerkundliche Mitteilungen* 6. Jahrgg., N. F. Bd. I, Nr. 1–4 [1958]: 33–81), especially pp. 73 ff.

of northern and southern California and the Algonquin of the East, the Central Plains, and the West (cf. *Ursprung*, 5:734). Now the prehistoric cultural complex of central California lies at the center of the region of the myth of the cosmogonic dive. This complex is on the earliest level of the prehistory of central California—about 2500 B.C.—and is characterized by the objects called "charmstones." On the other hand, prehistoric stone objects of the same type, called "plummets," have been found in sites of the archaic period ("Neolithic" hunters, without pottery) of the most easterly zone of North America (extending from Maine, on the Atlantic coast, to Georgia and Tennessee), where there is another center for our myth. It follows that relations certainly existed between the prehistoric cultures of California and those of the East. In addition, the North American "plummets" and "charmstones" correspond to similar stone objects found in the Neolithic sites of northern Eurasia.[140] So it is probable that the myth of the cosmogonic dive passed from northern Asia to America with the earliest waves of Neolithic culture, during the third millennium.[141]

If our myth was disseminated in America during the Neolithic period, its "origin" is certainly earlier. As to the region in which it first took form, two hypotheses have been advanced. On the assumption that the motif of the primordial Waters could not have sprung from the imagination of continental peoples, Harva had proposed India as its original home.[142] The hypothesis of a southern and maritime origin is also maintained by A. B. Rooth: "It is logical to seek the origin of the conception of the primeval ocean in a coastal or island area, where it would seem natural. We may draw the following conclusion from this reflection: this myth seems to have originated in the eastern Asiatic coastal area, from whence it spread westward across Siberia and eastward across the North American continent."[143]

However, Gudmund Hatt has pointed out that the cosmogonic dive predominates especially in the mythologies of continental peoples, and is less frequent among maritime peoples. And in fact the myth is not found on the Pacific coast of Asia; on the contrary, it is documented among peoples that inhabit the interior of the Malay Peninsula (Semang, etc.) and among the aborigines of India, and disappears precisely among the essentially maritime cultures, for example in Micronesia. So it seems likely that the inspiration for the motif of the cosmogonic dive did not come from a marine landscape but from the image of the great lakes of northern Asia.[144]

STRUCTURE AND MEANING OF THE COSMOGONIC DIVE

However, too much importance should not be attached to the correspondences between a geographical setting and the landscape of the myth. The latter belongs to the world of the imagination, and hence bears a relation to the cosmic milieu comparable to that between *Madame Bovary* and an actual case of adultery. The primordial Waters are a motif that is almost universally disseminated, and it is not necessary to seek its origin in a particular geographical region. Rather, it embodies an exemplary image of mythical geography. Now the theme of the cosmogonic dive already presupposes the image of the primitive Ocean, and it is this image that must be the starting point for an analysis of the structure and development of our myth.

Since it depends upon the image of the primordial Waters, the theme of the cosmogonic dive must be very old. In all likelihood it

140. Cf. R. Beardsley, "Culture Sequence in Central California" (*American Antiquity* 14 [1948]: 24 ff.). See also Alan L. Bryan, "Early Man in America and the Late Pleistocene Chronology of Western Canada and Alaska" (*Current Anthropology* 10 [1969]: 339–65), pp. 350–57.

141. Josef Haekel, "Prof. Wilhelm Schmidts Bedeutung für die Religionsgeschichte des vorkolumbischen Amerika" (*Saeculum* 7 [1956]: 1–39), pp. 26 ff. According to Haekel, the myth cannot be considered the earliest North American cosmogony. The motif of creation by a spiritual act of the Supreme Being, or with the aid of a primordial substance, is documented on even earlier strata of culture: those of the hunters and gatherers of the Glacial and Postglacial periods (ibid., p. 27). For a dissenting opinion see R. Pettazzoni, "L'idée de Création et la notion d'un Être Créateur chez les Californiens" (*Proceedings of the 32 International Congress of Americanists* [Copenhagen, 1956], Copenhagen, 1958, pp. 238–44).

142. Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen*, p. 108. We suggested the same origin in an early article. "Un volum de cercetari literare" (*Vremea*, 3 July 1934).

143. Anna Birgitta Rooth, "The Creation Myths of the North American Indians" (*Anthropos* 52 [1957]: 497–508), p. 500.

144. Hatt, *Asiatic Influences*, p. 30.

was disseminated from a single center. That the myth entered America before the third millennium indicates that it was already known to the prehistoric peoples of central and northern Asia.[145] Most probably the original form of the myth showed the Creator himself diving into the depths of the Waters in the shape of an animal to bring back the substance needed for the creation of the Earth. As we have seen, this form is found in India and in some northern Asian and North American variants.[146]

The episode of the theriomorphic Creator diving to the bottom of the Ocean later evolved toward what may be termed the second phase of the myth: thenceforth the Creator calls upon various animals, his servants or helpers, to do the diving. It is from this second phase that the dramatic and, in the last analysis, "dualistic" possibilities of the cosmogonic dive are developed. The incidents of the dive and of the cosmogonic work that follows it are thenceforth cited to explain the imperfections of the Creation. Since it is no longer the Creator himself who dives to obtain the material for the Earth, but one of his helpers or servants who accomplishes the task, it becomes possible, precisely because of this episode, to introduce an element of insubordination, antagonism, or opposition into the myth. The "dualistic" interpretation of the Creation was made possible by the progressive transformation of God's theriomorphic helper into his "servant," his "companion," and finally his adversary.

It would be fruitless to hope that we could reconstruct the different stages that, for example, separate the myth as we find it in aboriginal India and in North America from its "dualistic" forms

145. Waldemar Jochelson states that, though it is unknown to the Koryaks, the myth is found among the Chukchees and the Yukhagirs, but he fails to give any data in support of his assertion; cf. *The Koryak. Religion and Myths* (= *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition* 6, 1 [Leiden-New York, 1905]: 351 ff.).

146. The dive by an ornithomorphic god appears to be documented in the rock paintings and the ceramics of the Bronze Age in northern Europe and western Siberia; cf. Karl Jettmar, "Die Aussage der Archäologie zur Religionsgeschichte Nordeurasiens" in Ivar Paulson et al., *Die Religionen Nordeurasiens und der amerikanischen Arktis* (Stuttgart, 1962), p. 313.

in central Asia and southeastern Europe. But, at least in its general outlines, we can imagine this long process of transformation. Above all we must take into account the archaic cosmogonies and mythologies (probably of lunar structure) that explain the World and human existence by a system of oppositions and tensions, yet without arriving at an ethical or metaphysical "dualism." The polarities discoverable in the Cosmos and in human life (day and night, up and down, chaos and creation, winter-summer, virtual-manifest, male-female, birth-death, etc.) illustrated, and provided the model for, the periodic renewal of the Universe and Life; they also represented the theory that could account for the realities of experience, and first of all for the human condition. We must suppose that such concepts found various degrees of expression in the prehistoric and protohistoric civilizations of central and southeastern Asia, and, of course, elsewhere as well.[147] We have no reason to believe that such archaic concepts had completely disappeared from the regions in which we later find "dualistic" systems, or, consequently, that the latter represented nothing but late influences, of Iranian origin. Considering the conservative nature of religious ideas, it is likely that these archaic concepts survived, though at the same time they were greatly altered by the impact of later influences. We cannot explain the different forms of our myth—from its hypothetical "first state" (the theriomorphic Creator diving to the bottom of the Ocean) to the variants found in southeastern Europe (the Devil performing the dive at God's command)—except by supposing a series of successive modifications, which took place at different periods and under the influence of new religious ideas. The dramatic incidents of the dive are able to explain both the appearance of Death and that of mountains and marshes, both the "birth" of the Devil and the existence of Evil.

147. We shall not enter upon a discussion of this problem here. See Carl Hentze, *Bronzegerät, Kultbauten, Religion im ältesten China der Shangzeit* (Anvers, 1951); cf. also our observations in *Critique*, No. 83 (April 1954): 331 ff. On the "origin" of the *Dualsysteme* cf. Hermann Baumann, *Das doppelte Geschlecht* (Berlin, 1955), pp. 314–32 and passim. See also Eliade, *The Quest, History and Meaning in Religion* (Chicago, 1969), pp. 127–75 ("Prolegomenon to Religious Dualism").

There is no use supposing that the myth was reinvented a number of times. But we can divine the reasons that led to its being continually reinterpreted and re-evaluated. It could, for example, illustrate the *otiositas* of God after the creation of the World, as among the Finno-Ugrians and in eastern Europe. It was also susceptible to contaminations with dualistic Manichaean and Bogomil elements, as was probably the case in Russia and the Balkans. But since the cosmogonic dive is not documented in the Mediterranean region or in the ancient Near East or in Iran, while it is disseminated all over Eurasia, we cannot explain its presence in eastern Europe solely by late influences from Gnosticism and Manichaeanism. These influences explain only its "dualistic" aspect. The archaism of the myth in its pre-dualistic form invites us to consider it already a part of the religious patrimony of the protohistorical peoples of southeastern Europe. The fact that so many other elements of archaic culture survived in the Balkans and eastern Europe even down to the beginning of the twentieth century makes such a hypothesis less risky than it appears to be at first sight.[148]

But we hasten to add that the interest of the myth of the cosmogonic dive does not lie in its "history," difficult as that is to reconstruct. For us, its importance would seem to lie in the fact that it represents the only "folk" cosmogony of southeastern Europe.[149] The fact that this archaic myth, continually reinterpreted and re-evaluated, was preserved by the peoples of that region proves that it satisfied a profound need of the folk soul. On the one hand, it accounted for the imperfection of the Creation and the existence of evil in the world. On the other hand, it revealed aspects of God that Christianity explicitly denied, but which, in short, had never ceased to inspire questions and speculations. One of these aspects

148. Cf. Leopold Schmidt, *Gestaltheiligkeit im bäuerlichen Arbeitsmythos* (Vienna, 1952); Jaap Kunst, "Cultural Relations between the Balkans and Indonesia" (in *Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen,* Medeling, no. 107 [Amsterdam, 1954]); see also below, chap. 5.

149. It is well known that nonbiblical cosmogonies have disappeared from the folklore of western Europe. Paul Sébillot observed that there is not a single cosmogonic myth in French folk traditions (see *Folklore de France* 1 [1905]: 182).

of God, brought out especially in the Balkan legends, was his being a *deus otiosus,* which explained the contradictions and the pains of human life. Another aspect was that of a fellowship, a friendship, or even a consanguinity between God and the Devil, a mystery that had tormented the human mind long before Zervanism, and the historically documented solutions to which come near to constituting a phenomenology of the divine biunity or of the *coincidentia oppositorum.*[150] To be sure, in the folk strata in which the myth was current there was no question of systematic reflections, but rather of images, scenarios, and symbols that helped the audience to grasp a profound, and otherwise mysterious, structure of the divinity.

Though continually reinterpreted, the myth of the cosmogonic dive had retained its original setting even in its latest versions: the Great Waters of the time before Creation, with God sending a diving creature to plunge into their depths. This is certainly an extremely archaic image.[151] Beyond its immediate context—which in each case depends on the development of the narrative plot—the image of the primordial Waters and the cosmogonic mystery that follows have a function on a deeper plane of the life of the psyche. The primordial Waters and the cosmogonic mystery are part of the imaginary world that is increasingly recognized to be a constituent dimension of human existence. It is not without significance to observe, once again, to what an extent this world of the imagination is peopled by symbols, figures, and scenarios that come down to us from the earliest prehistory. Continuity on the plane of image and mythological scenario has been maintained, despite countless vicissitudes on the plane of narration, and drastic substitutions on the plane of religious and moral ideology. This observation is important. For it is by its efforts to understand such

150. Cf. M. Eliade, "La coincidentia oppositorum et le mystère de la totalité" (*Eranos-Jahrbuch* 27 [Zurich, 1959]: 195–236), reprinted in *Mephistophélès et l'Androgyne* (Gallimard, 1961).

151. See also F. R. Schröder, "Die Göttin des Urmeeres und ihr männlicher Partner" ([Paul-Braunes] *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur,* 82 [1960]: 221–64), and Kurt Schier, "Die Erdschöpfung aus dem Urmeer und die Kosmogonie der Völospá" (*Märchen, Mythos, Dichtung=Festschrift Friedrich von der Leyens* [Munich, 1963]: 303–34).

continuities between the world we live in and the bygone worlds of prehistory that modern research—not only in paleoethnology and the history of religions but also in depth psychology—has succeeded in renewing man's knowledge of man.

1955, 1961.

4

Prince Dragoş and the "Ritual Hunt"

In the historiographic consciousness of the chroniclers and their readers, the "official founding" (to use E. Lozovan's term)[1] of the Principality of Moldavia is connected with a legendary event: the hunt for an aurochs (*zimbru, bour*) as the result of which Dragoş, a Romanian from Maramureş, becomes the first Voivode of Moldavia. It is not our task to discover what disguised or transfigured historical facts may be contained in this legend. The origins and early stages of the Moldavian State are a problem of medieval Romanian history that is beyond our competence and into which we have no wish to enter here. Our investigation lies on an entirely different plane: it is not the possible "historicity" of an aurochs hunt that is of concern to us, but precisely the opposite: the mythology underlying the legend that grew up around such a hunt.

Certain peoples, both ancient and modern, have preserved myths or more or less fragmentary mythological memories concerning their "origins." Revered by romantic historiography, these fabulous traditions were later "demythicized" by historians of the critical and rationalistic school. Far be it from us to minimize the results of their scrupulously careful investigations. But whatever purpose they may have served in the nineteenth century, we may ask if such exercises in "demythicization" are still worth pursuing. Further efforts to prove the nonhistoricity of one or another legendary tradition would be a waste of time. There is agreement today that the myth and the legend are "true" in another sense than the "truth" of, say, a historical reality. "Myth" and "history" represent two different modes of existing in the World, two dif-

1. Eugène Lozovan, *Villes, campagnes et routes de la Romania Orientale* (in F. Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen* 5 [Berlin, 1962]: 327–62), pp. 348 ff.

ferent approaches of the mind to the interpretation of the data of reality—modes of being and activities of the mind that, in any case, are not mutually exclusive. A people, as well as an individual, can be conscious of its responsibilities in history and courageously assume them, while at the same time continuing to enjoy the ancient myths and legends and to create new ones; for they account for other dimensions of human existence.

We shall not carry these few preliminary remarks farther. Suffice it to say that, from the point of view we adopt, Dragoş and the aurochs hunt are part of a universe whose structure is symbolic, and which it is important to explore carefully and to understand. In other words, what is of primary interest to us is to discover the meanings of the legend and to comprehend the system of spiritual values in which similar legends could arise and flourish. Though we must enter into the problem of the origin and dissemination of our mythical theme, let us make it clear from the beginning that we do not consider it crucial. The question that can elucidate the function of a legendary story in the life of a people is not: "Whence does the legend come?" Assuming that it really does come from somewhere, we must ask: "Why was precisely this legend adopted, and what was made of it after it was assimilated?"

THE CHRONICLERS

The earliest chroniclers record the tradition briefly. "In the year 6867 (= 1359) of the Creation, by the will of God Moldavia began. And it began in this way: Dragoş, Voivode of Maramureş, came from Hungary hunting an aurochs, and he reigned for two years."[2] The same account is found, in almost identical terms, in the *Letopisetz* of Bistritza and in the Serbo-Moldavian chronicle of Neamtz.[3] The Moldo-Polish chronicle adds some details: "By the

2. Ioan Bogdan, *Vechile cronici moldoveneşti până la Ureche. Texte slave cu studiu, traduceri şi note* (Bucharest, 1891), p. 193.

3. Ioan Bogdan, *Cronice inedite atingătoare la istoria Românilor. Adunate şi publicate cu traduceri şi adnotaţiuni* (Bucharest, 1895), pp. 49, 100. Texts reprinted by Gheorghe Brătianu, *Tradiţia istorică despre întemeierea Statelor Româneşti* (Bucharest, 1945), pp. 247 ff. Now see Dan Simonescu, "Tradiţia istorică şi folclorică în problema 'întemeierii' Moldovei" (*Studii de Folclor şi Literatură* [Bucharest, 1967], pp. 27–40); C. C. Giurescu, "Valoarea istorică a tradiţiei conservate de I. Neculce" (ibid., pp. 439–95).

will of God the first Voivode Dragoş came from Hungary, from the river and the place called Maramureş, hunting an aurochs, which he killed near the River Moldova, and he rejoiced there with his boyars, and the country pleased him and he stayed, and he colonized it with his Moldavians from Hungary, and he was their Prince for two years."[4]

The fullest version is given by the so-called Anonymous Chronicle. "And among them there was an intelligent and valiant man named Dragoş, and one day he set out with his companions to hunt wild beasts, and on the high mountains he found the trail of an aurochs, and he followed the aurochs among the high mountains and he crossed the mountains and, still following the aurochs, he came to a very beautiful plain and he overtook the aurochs at the edge of a stream, under a willow, and he killed it and feasted on the meat of it.

"And they received from God the idea of looking for a place to settle and live in that country and, all together, they decided to remain there; and they returned and told the others about the beauties of the country and its streams and its springs, so that they would settle there too; and this idea pleased the other companions, and they decided to go where their comrades had been, and they fell to choosing tracts of land, for the place was uninhabited and on the borders [there were] nomad Tatars with their herds; and after that they asked Vladislav, the Hungarian prince, to let them go, and Prince Vladislav, with great compassion, let them go.

"And they set out from Maramureş, with all their companions and their wives and their children, beyond the high mountains, and, cutting the forests and moving away the stones, by God's will they crossed the mountains, and they came to the place where Dragoş had killed the aurochs, and they liked the place and they settled there, and they chose from among them a wise man named Dragoş and they elected him Prince and Voivode. And it was then that, by God's will, Moldavia began.

"And the Voivode Dragoş first settled on the river of Moldavia, and then he colonized Baia and other regions beside the rivers and the springs, and he made the princely blazon for the whole

4. Bogdan, *Vechile cronici moldoveneşti până la Ureche,* p. 223; Brătianu, *Tradiţia istorică,* p. 248.

country the head of an aurochs. And the Voivode Dragoş reigned for two years."[5]

The legend is recounted by the later chroniclers who wrote in Romanian. The version given by Ureche is the most complete and seems to have been the source for the other chroniclers. In general, Ureche reproduces the account in the Anonymous Chronicle, adding a few details that are interesting. "The shepherds of Transylvania—which is called Maramureş—traveling through the mountains with their flocks, came upon a wild beast named *bour* [aurochs], and, after hunting it on the mountains with their dogs, pursued it to the River Moldova. There, the beast becoming tired, they killed it at the place that is now called Boureni. And they founded the village, and on the blazon of the country they put the head of the aurochs. And the bitch that had chased the beast died, and since her name was Molda they named the river Molda, or, as some call it, Moldova; and they also gave the name Moldova to the [whole] country, after the name of the river."[6]

Ureche does not refer to Dragoş. He mentions several sons of a Prince (Domn) who arrived from Maramureş hunting. And the fragment attributed to the Stolnic Cantacuzene says only that some shepherds, moving about the forest with their flocks, came upon an aurochs and, pursuing it, crossed the mountains.[7] As R. Vuia remarks, this tradition offers a more or less reasonable explanation for the founding of the Principality of Moldavia, almost devoid of legendary elements.[8] But obviously we have here a process, whether conscious or not, of "demythicization": the shepherds have been substituted for the hunters. Ureche also uses the "etymological proof" (the River Moldova got its name from the bitch Molda, the *bour* was killed at Boureni), which also indicates an attempt to

5. *Cronica anonimă,* in Bogdan, *Vechile cronici moldoveneşti până la Ureche,* pp. 237–38; Brătianu, *Tradiţia istorică,* pp. 248 ff.

6. Grigore Ureche Vornicul şi Simion Dascălul, *Letopiseţul Tării Moldovei,* ed. C. C. Giurescu (Craiova, 1934), pp. 4 ff.; Brătianu, *Tradiţia istorică,* p. 250.

7. M. Kogălniceanu, *Cronicele României,* p. 110.

8. R. Vuia, "Legenda lui Dragoş" (*Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Naţională* 1 [Cluj, 1922]: 300–309), p. 302.

rationalize a legendary tradition and to make it at once more "historic" and more "natural." To what an extent this etymologizing tendency was to the taste of the period we can learn from the marginal notes to Ureche's Chronicle (the name of Suceava comes from Hungarian *soci,* "furriers," etc.).[9]

In his Polish poem Miron Costin develops and complicates the Dragoş legend by introducing, among other things, elements of folk poetry: the young hero makes ready to set out in order to test his strength, his mother tries to hold him back by telling him of the dangers that await him, and so on.[10] For this reason we consider Miron Costin's poem less useful for our investigation, as we do the version by Cantemir (who in all probability derived his narrative from Miron Costin). As for the details transmitted by Bandinus, they evidence a "literary" origin, whether the author took them from late sources (annotations on Ureche, the Hungarian Chronicle "Leatopiseţul Unguresc") or partly invented them on the basis of his literary recollections.[11]

"RITUAL HUNT" AND "ANIMAL GUIDES"

We shall later examine the possible sources of this tradition. But since we intend to discuss the legend of Dragoş from the point of view of the history of religions, let us try to ascertain its structure. We obviously have a case of a "ritual hunt," for the pursuit of the aurochs ends in the discovery of an unknown country and finally in the founding of a state. This mythical theme is extremely widespread, whether in the form of origin myths (origins of peoples, states, dynasties, etc.) or in that of folktales relating the unexpected consequences of pursuing some animal. In other words, the legend

9. Kogălniceanu, *Cronicele României,* pp. 378–79.

10. Vuia, "Legenda lui Dragoş," p. 302. Now see E. Lozovan, "Rurik et Dragoş" (*Revue des Études Roumaines* 11–12 [1969]: 61–79), pp. 66 ff.

11. The protagonists are three brothers, Domucus, Volocha, and Dragoş (whose name a river now bears, etc.). V. A. Ureche, *Codex Bandinus. Memoriu asupra scrierii lui Bandinus dela 1646, urmat de text, însoţit de acte şi documente* (Analele Academiei Române, Memorii, Secţia istorică, series 2., 16 [1893–94]: 1–355, Bucharest, 1895), pp. 306–7; cf. also pp. 128–30. On Bandinus see chap. 6.

of Dragoş represents only one of the many variants of the theme of the "ritual hunt." R. Vuia, following P. Cassel, has already tabulated some of the more important variants:[12] an Indian prince hunts a stag and loses his way in an unknown land; led on by a stag, Dietrich even reaches the Underworld; a Tyrolean hunter, pursuing a stag, is killed in the mountains; the hunted stag changes into a girl or a demon, and so on.

We do not intend to review all these variants and analyze them further. What is of interest to us at the moment is the function of guide assumed by an animal come upon in the course of a hunt or, alternatively, appearing under some other circumstances. Thus, for example, according to Gregory of Tours, a doe showed Clovis the ford across the flooded Vienne, when he was preparing to attack Alaric and the Gothic army.[13] And in another passage (*Hist.* 4. 44) the same author relates that the Burgundian general Mummolus, hurrying to help the people of Grenoble whom the Lombards were besieging, was able to cross the Isère because a "wild animal" showed him the ford.

The theme appears to have been popular in the West; Fredegarius relates that a "wild animal" showed the Vandals the passage across Gibraltar, and so they were able to make their way from Spain to Africa.[14] According to another tradition, the Franks, pursued by the Saxons, were led across the River Main by a doe.[15] Pio Rajna cites an episode in the *Life of Saint Severinus,* written at the beginning of the sixth century (Severinus died in 482): A company of Christians from Novico, going to visit the saint, are overtaken by a snowstorm in the mountains. A dream comforts their leader. And in fact the next morning a huge bear appears to them and

12. Vuia, "Legenda lui Dragoş," pp. 303–4, summarizing P. Cassel, *Einleitung und Deutung des Buches der Sieben Weisen Meister* (Berlin, 1891), p. 104. Unfortunately, Vuia seems not to have known Carl Pschmadt's fundamental work, *Die Sage von der verfolgten Hinde* (inaugural dissertation, Greifswald, 1911). For the later literature see nn. 16 and 18.

13. Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 2: 37.

14. Fredegarius, *Historia Francorum* 2: 60.

15. Thietmar of Merseburg, 7: 53; cf. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsche Sagen* (1816), no. 455.

guides them for 125 miles.[16] Another tradition reports the adventure that befell Lopichis, an ancestor of the historian Paulus Diaconus: taken prisoner by the Avars, he escaped and was led back to his native Italy by a wolf.[17] And the examples could be multiplied.[18]

For reasons easy to understand, the story of the invasion of the Huns, narrated by Jordanes, enjoyed unparalled popularity. The irruption of the Huns into Europe, in 375, though really only one episode in the long series of invasions by peoples from the Eurasian steppes, had strong repercussions; it could not easily be forgotten. Jordanes, following Priscus, relates that the Huns lived beyond the Maeotic marshes and devoted themselves entirely to hunting. One day when some of their hunters were looking for game at the farthest edge of the Maeotis a doe suddenly appeared and plunged into the marshes. The creature acted like a guide. It went on a little way, then stopped, so that the hunters were able to follow it on foot and finally to reach the further side of the Maeotic marshes, which they had supposed to be as impassable as the sea. When they arrived in the country of the Scythians (*Scythica terra*), the doe

16. *Mon. Germ. Hist. Auct. ant.* 1, 2: 22; Pio Rajna, *Le origini dell'epopea francese* (Florence, 1884), p. 252. In connection with the same text, Altheim (*Geschichte der Hunnen* 1 [1959]: 235) refers to an article that we have been unable to consult: H. J. Diesner, in: *Wissenschaftl. Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther Universität* (Halle-Wittenberg) 7 (1958): 1170.

17. Paulus Diaconus, *Hist. Lang.* 4: 37; cf. Grimm, *Deutsche Sagen,* no. 407; Pschmadt, *Die Sage,* pp. 39 f. Altheim, after citing G. Baesecke, *Vor- u. Frühgeschichte d. deutschen Schrift* 1: 334, to the effect that these two legends are closely connected, concludes that they indicate the influence of the horse-breeding peoples of Asia on the Germans (*Gesch. d. Hunnen* 1: 235). But see farther on.

18. Rajna, *Le origini dell'epopea francese,* pp. 250–51, gives four more examples: in the *Chanson des Saines* a stag crosses the Rhine, thus showing the French army the location of the ford; in *Fierabras* a species of deer guides Richard of Normandy through the swift current of Flogot; in the *Karlamagnus Saga* a white stag crosses the Gironde at the request of Charlemagne; in the *Chevalerie Ogier* Charlemagne is guided across the Alps by a white stag. These examples, already discussed by Gaston Paris, Léon Gauthier, and Carl Pschmadt, have been restudied and added to by A. H. Krappe, "Guiding Animals" (*Journal of American Folklore* 55 [1942]: 228–46), pp. 236–37. See also Pschmadt, *Die Sage,* pp. 31 ff., 40 ff.

disappeared. The Huns, who had no idea that another world existed beyond the marshes, were filled with admiration for the land of the Scythians. They thought that the previously unknown way across the Maeotic marshes had been revealed to them by the divinity. When they returned to their own people, they praised the new land and persuaded the rest to follow them, using the path that the doe had revealed. And when they arrived in the *Scythica terra* they sacrificed all the prisoners they had taken to the goddess Victory.[19]

The elements to be borne in mind for the purposes of our investigation are as follows: (1) the Huns were unaware that a territory beyond the Maeotic marshes existed, for they lived cut off from the rest of the world; (2) they were hunters pure and simple; seeing the doe, they followed it, at first as game, but they soon comprehended the "divine" nature of the incident, for the doe stopped from time to time to wait for them; in short, it was no longer *game* but a *guide,* and it disappeared when the hunters were safely on the other side of the marshes; (3) when they returned to "Scythia" with the entire tribe, the Huns behaved in the manner of hunter-warriors: their first prisoners were sacrificed to Victory. The transition to war was made "naturally." And we know that the Huns waged war in the manner of the hunters of the Eurasian steppes, that is, in imitation of the behavior of carnivores pursuing cervids.

19. Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum sive Gothorum,* pp. 123 ff. [chap. 24]. On the significance of this passage cf. Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen,* 1: 6 ff. See also Procopius of Caesarea, *Bell. Goth.* 4: 5, and Karl Dietrich, *Byzantinische Quellen zum Länder-und-Völkerkunde* 2 (1912): 4. J. Marquart, *Osteuropäische und Ostasiatische Streifzüge* (Leipzig, 1903), p. 529, considers that Procopius refers to the proto-Bulgarians. Rajna was inclined to believe that the Huns had obtained the legend from the Goths, or that the story recorded by Priscus-Jordanes had passed through "a Gothic crucible" (*Le origini dell'epopea francese,* p. 252). However, Jordanes was not descended from the Goths but from the Alani; cf. Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen* 5: 27. Krappe had concluded that, since no Germanic tradition precedes the legend of the arrival of the Huns in Europe (375), the theme must be Hunnish in origin ("Guiding Animals," pp. 240 ff.). But Krappe had overlooked certain Greek and Latin traditions that we shall discuss further on.

ORIGIN MYTHS

We shall return to this myth of the Huns. Let us first complete our comparative documentation, beginning with the Greco-Latin world. In his description of Picenum, Strabo (5. 4. 2) relates that the Picentes originated in the country of the Sabines: a woodpecker guided their ancestors to their new country. This, Strabo adds, explains their name, for they call the bird *picus* and consider it consecrated to Mars.[20] In another passage Strabo cites the myth of the origin of the Samnites: the Sabines once consecrated all the infants born during the year to Mars; when they reached maturity, they were sent out as colonists, and a bull showed them the way.[21] After the Samnites, Strabo goes on, come the Hirpini: their name comes from the wolf that guided them to their country; for *hirpus,* Strabo explains, is the Samnite word for "wolf," a tradition also documented in Festus.[22]

These three origin myths have a common element: an Italic people first attained the status of an independent ethnic group by following an animal that served it as guide; the animal is "consecrated" to a god, which in certain cases may mean that it is his representative or his epiphany. In two of the myths the migrants, on becoming a people, took the name of their animal guide: Picentes, Hirpini. The number of Indo-European tribes and peoples whose ethnic name is derived from an animal is considerable.[23] The name of Italy itself, **Vitalia,* was believed to derive from *vitulus,* "young bullock." But this is an entirely different problem. The mythical theme we are studying concerns the foundation of a colony, or the establishment of a people, as the result of follow-

20. The woodpecker as bird of Mars is also documented in the legend of Romulus; like the she-wolf, the woodpecker had fed the twins; Plutarch, *Romulus* 4: 2; cf. F. Altheim, *A History of Roman Religion* (London, 1938), pp. 66 ff.

21. Strabo, *Geography* 5, 4. 12.

22. Festus, *Epit.,* p. 106, Müller; cf. Altheim, *A History of Roman Religion,* p. 67. On the religious meanings of the ethnic name "wolf" see above, chap. 1.

23. Richard von Kienle, "Tier-Völkernamen bei indogermanischen Stämme" (*Wörter und Sachen* 14 [1932]: 25–67).

ing an animal guide. R. Merkelbach notes that this mythical theme is not confined to the Italic peoples.[24] In his "Hymn to Apollo" (65 f.) Callimachus relates that Battus was guided to Libya by Apollo in the shape of a crow; the god showed him the place where he was to build his city, Cyrene. And Apollo's white crows guided the Boeotian emigrants.[25] This is a well-known motif in the Mediterranean world: letting an animal choose the site of a city or a sanctuary. Sometimes an oracle foretells the animal's arrival and advises following it. This is a "rationalization," perhaps a late one; originally the animal itself performed the oracular function: its epiphanies and its movements themselves constituted the oracle.

The Delphic oracle urges Cadmus to follow a cow; she goes to the Grove of Ares, and where she lies down Cadmus builds the city of Thebes.[26] According to one tradition it was also a cow that showed Ilus the place where Troy was to be built.[27] A sow guided the exiled Trojans to Lavinium, probably the oldest settlement of Ostia.[28] Athenaeus hands down a tradition preserved by Creophi-

24. Reinhold Merkelbach, "Spechtfahne und Stammessage der Picentes" (*Studi in onore di Ugo Enrico Paoli* [Florence, 1955], pp. 513–20), p. 514. The importance of this article cannot be overestimated. Merkelbach shows that the animal appearing on their standards must be related to the origin myths of certain peoples of antiquity. In other words, by following the standard the army reactualizes the mythical founding of the nation.

25. Schol. Aristophanes, *Nub.*, 133, cited by Krappe, "Guiding Animals," p. 230, n. 22.

26. Apollodorus, *Library* 3, 4. 1; cf. Pausanias 9, 12. 1 s., 9, 19. 4. See the discussion of this episode in A. B. Cook, *Zeus* 1 (Cambridge, 1914): 540 ff. See also F. Vian, *Les origines de Thèbes, Cadmos et les Spartes* (Paris, 1963), pp. 78 ff.

27. Tzetzes, *Scholia in Lycoph.*, 29 ff.; Cook, *Zeus* 1: 468 ff. Another variant of the same tradition was recorded by Apollodorus, *Library* 3, 12. 3. See also Frazer's commentary in his *Apollodorus, The Library* (New York, 1921), p. 38.

28. Dionysus of Halicarnassus 1. 55 ff.; Krappe, "Guiding Animals," p. 229. The foundation rites of Mande villages may be referred to in this connection: a bull, turned loose for the occasion, is pursued and sacrificed, and its grave becomes the center of the new settlement; cf. L. Frobenius, *Kulturgeschichte Afrikas* (Zurich, 1933), pp. 179 ff. But in this case there is a foundation rite—not merely an indication of the site to be occupied by the future city.

lus, according to which Ephesus was built on the spot where the boar whose appearance had been announced by an oracle was overtaken and killed by the future inhabitants of the city.[29] There is no need to multiply examples. We will merely add that animals not only indicate the site of a city or a colony but also serve as guides in desperate situations from which there seems to be no escape. Callisthenes, the earliest historian of Alexander the Great, relates that the guide who was leading him through the desert to the oracle of Ammon lost his way, whereupon Alexander and his army were guided by two snakes.[30]

As we have just seen, the appearance and pursuit and, in some cases, the killing of a wild or domestic animal are related to the birth of a people, the founding of a colony or a city, the consultation of an oracle by the creator of the first European empire. In all these myths, legends, and literary stereotypes, there seems to be an underlying idea: an animal determines *orientation* in an unknown territory, or saves a human group from an inextricable situation; the act is not only "miraculous," it marks, or makes possible, the beginning of a new historical reality: city, nation, state, empire. We shall later see that the revelations made by animals can also have reference to other realities.

For the moment, let us emphasize the difference between the legends of Dragoş and that of the Huns crossing the Maeotic marshes on the one hand and, on the other, all the rest: in the former, the animal guide is pursued by hunters; in the latter, the animal appears at a critical juncture, but there is no question of a hunt; indeed, from the first the animal is considered a guide sent by the gods (even when it is hunted down and killed, as in the legend of the foundation of Ephesus: the oracle had already foretold the appearance of the boar and ordered that it be hunted and killed in order to determine the center of the future city). The

29. Athenaeus 8. 62; Krappe, "Guiding Animals," p. 229. The myth still survives, perhaps merely as a literary stereotype, among the earliest Christian chroniclers: Constantine's horse showed him the perimeter of the future walls of Constantinople; cf. the references in ibid., p. 229, n. 11.

30. *Fr. Gr. Hist.* 124 F 14 a; see the additional references in Merkelbach, "Spechtfahne und Stammessage," p. 314, n. 1. Cf. also Krappe, "Guiding Animals," p. 321 and nn. 33–34.

second part of the Hunnish legend can be considered to belong to this latter category: from a certain moment the doe is no longer hunted; it acts as a guide and the Huns regard it as sent by a divine power.

HUNOR AND MAGOR

The Magyar legend of Hunor and Magor employs the same motif. Hunting on the steppe, the brothers Hunor and Magor, sons of the giant Menroth, saw a doe and followed it through the Maeotic marshes until they came to a fertile plain. There the doe disappeared, but since the place seemed a fit one for flocks Hunor and Magor went home and asked their father's permission to settle there with their companions. Six years later songs and music drew them back to the steppe. The wives of the son of King Bereka (Bedar) and King Dula's daughters were celebrating a festival (*festum tubae*), about which we have no information. Hunor and Magor carried off the wives and daughters, and their descendants became the ancestors of the Huns and the Magyars.[31]

Comparing this legend with the legend of Dragoş, Vuia concludes that "their content is basically identical."[32] He even finds two similar details: (1) Hunor and Magor find that the country is suitable for flocks (*pro armentis nutriendis ipsam conspexerunt opportunam: Chron. Hungaricum*), and in Ureche's chronicle the hunters declare that "the place is good for pasture" (*au socotit cu toţii, că e locul bun de hrană*); (2) in the Magyar legend the two brothers ask their father's permission to migrate to the Maeotis, and in the Romanian legend Dragoş and his companions ask Vladislav, the

31. Simonis of Keza, *Gesta Hungarorum* (= *Cronicon Hungaricum*, ed. Al. Horányi [Vienna, 1781], chap. 1, pp. 31–32, reprinted by Vuia, "Legenda lui Dragoş," p. 306), and *Chronicon Pictum* 1: 250 ff. The Hungarian scholars consider that the legend is based on the Hunnish version; cf. Sebestyén, cited by Vuia, p. 308, n. 1. On Simon Keza's sources and method cf. Kurt Wais, *Frühe Epik Westeuropas und die Vorgeschichte des Niebelungenliedes* 1 (Tübingen, 1953): 32 ff. On the whole problem cf. Michael de Ferdinandy, "Studien zu den Quellen der ugrischen Mythologie" (*Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher* 28 [1956]: 18–34); de Ferdinandy, *Wörterbuch der Mythologie* 2: 227, 233.

32. Vuia, "Legenda lui Dragoş," p. 306.

Hungarian prince, for permission to leave.[33] Nevertheless, though he does not reject the possibility of borrowing, Vuia is inclined to consider the Romanian legend a variant of an international theme of Indian origin.[34] The late Georges Brătianu, on the other hand, thought that the Hungarian legends of the conquest of Pannonia and Transylvania directly influenced the traditions of the "descent" of the "Hungarian" Romanians from Maramureş.[35]

We do not intend to discuss the problem of the Romanian historical tradition concerning the founding of the Principality of Moldavia.[36] But it is necessary to distinguish among three different realities: (1) the *event* or the *historical process* of the founding of the principality by Romanians coming from Maramureş; (2) the *tradition* concerning that event as it was recorded, interpreted, and presented by the earliest historiographers;[37] (3) the *myth* of the founding, including as essential elements the pursuit of an aurochs by a group of hunters, the crossing of the mountains, the killing of a wild animal, and the decision to settle in the newly discovered region.

It is possible that the earliest historiographers knew the Hungarian chronicles that related the legend of Hunor and Magor, and that they borrowed it in whole or in part. But this certainly does not imply that a similar legend did not circulate among the Romanians.[38] For as we have just seen, the mythical theme of an

33. Ibid., p. 306, n. 2.

34. Ibid., p. 309.

35. Brătianu, *Tradiţia istorică despre întemeierea Statelor româneşti*, pp. 125 ff.

36. On this subject G. Brătianu's book may be consulted, and, for the recent bibliography, the study by Eugène Lozovan cited in n. 1. The discussion in N. Iorga, *Histoire des Roumains* 3 (Paris-Bucharest, 1937): 341 ff., is still of value.

37. Brătianu emphasizes the fact that the earliest *letopisetz* in Slavonic—those of Bistritza and Putna, and the Anonymous Chronicle—were written about a century after the events they relate; cf. *Tradiţia istorică*, pp. 121–22.

38. Nothing can be determined concerning the "origin" of the oral folk tradition recorded by S. F. Marian, *Tradiţii poporane române* (Bucharest, 1895), pp. 40–63.

animal guiding an ethnic group to its future homeland is amply documented in Italy and the Hellenistic world. On the other hand, despite what R. Vuia thought, the two traditions—Hungarian and Moldavian—are not "identical." In the first case a doe guides Hunor and Magor across the marshes, then disappears. In the second case the animal is not a doe but an aurochs, and there is a real hunt, which ends in its death. If a similar legend did not exist among the Romanians, it is difficult to imagine why the chroniclers did not follow the Hungarian version *in every detail*—for the motif of the wonder-working deer exists in Romanian folklore, and its final disappearance provides a more dramatic, and hence more attractive, motif than the killing of the aurochs. R. Vuia's hypothesis that the story is a "heraldic legend"[39] is not convincing: because the blazon of Moldavia was an aurochs, the Hunor-Magor version was adopted with the substitution of the aurochs for the doe. But then one is at a loss to explain why the Hungarian tradition was not followed *in toto*, that is, retaining the extremely important element of the final *disappearance* of the aurochs (= doe). There is no use supposing that this new element—the killing of the animal—was introduced because the Romanian voivodes and boyars enjoyed hunting the aurochs.[40] The Huns were essentially hunters, yet the doe miraculously disappears after guiding their ancestors across the Maeotic marshes. We repeat: the mysterious disappearance of the animal guide represents a most effective dramatic element, and it is incomprehensible that it should have been suppressed if the legend of Dragoş was only a transposition of the Magyar version.

THE AUROCHS AND THE BULL

The theme of the "ritual hunt of the aurochs" is certainly autochthonous. The aurochs was already invested with a religious aura among the Dacians. It appears at the center of a shield found at Piatra Roşie,[41] and an inscription preserved in the Palatine Anthology reports that Trajan consecrated a gold-covered aurochs

39. Vuia, "Legenda lui Dragoş," p. 303.

40. Ibid., p. 309.

41. *Istoria României* 1 (Bucharest, 1960): 336.

horn, captured among the Dacian treasures, to Zeus Casios in his temple near Antioch.[42] Unfortunately, we still know very little about this subject. But whatever the role of the aurochs in Dacian mythology and religion may have been, it was certainly connected with a mythico-ritual ensemble of southern origin, with roots in prehistory. This mythico-ritual ensemble was obviously complex. We need only recall the role of the bull in the ancient Near East and the Mediterranean region.[43] The bull, wild or domesticated, appears in both heroic and fertility contexts: the bullfight represents an initiatory ordeal of the heroic type, but the sacrifice of a bull has cosmogonic meanings. Both the storm gods and the heroes were compared to bulls, and in the Avesta the bull already appeared on the standard (*gaoš drafšo*).[44] The sacrifice of a bull played an important role in the Mithraic Mysteries. The capture of the bull by Mithra forms part of an archaic myth, already Indo-Iranian; it provided an essential moment in the New Year festival[45]—so the episode had a cosmogonic meaning. Very probably the Mithraic Mysteries arose in northwestern Iran, in Armenia and the Caucasus. The rite of the sacrifice of a stolen bull still existed in the Caucasus at the beginning of the Christian era.[46] We know that the Mithraic Mysteries enjoyed considerable popularity in Dacia.[47] Nor is this the first or the last contact of the Dacians with Iranian spirituality.

42. *Antologia Palatina* 6: 332.

43. See M. Eliade, *Traité d'Histoire des Religions* (Paris, 1949), p. 85, and the bibliographies, pp. 113 ff. Cf. also A. Alvarez de Miranda, "Magia y Religión del toro norteafricano" (*Archivo Español de Arqueología* [Madrid, 1954], pp. 1–44).

44. *Yasna*, 10, 14; cf. Altheim, *Gesch. d. Hunnen* 1: 203, n. 14, bibliography on tauromorphic standards.

45. G. Widengren, "Stand und Aufgaben der iranischen Religionsgeschichte" (*Numen* 1 [1954]: 16–83; 2 [1955]: 47–134); 2: 94; cf. 1: 51 ff. See also Widengren, *Die Religionen Irans* (Stuttgart, 1965), pp. 41 ff.

46. F. Cumont, *Journal of Roman Studies* 27 (1937): 63–71.

47. The basic documentation is given in L. W. Jones, *The Cults of Dacia* (Univ. of California, Publ. Philol. 9, 8 [1929]: 245 ff.), O. Floca, "I culti orientali nella Dacia" (*Ephem. Dacoromana* 6 [1935]: 204 ff.).

These few indications cannot claim even to delimit an immense subject. But they introduce us to the religious universe that can make our myths and legends intelligible. We must now enter into the prehistory of the "ritual hunt," beginning with the mythico-religious function of the principal animals in our legends: the bull (= aurochs) and the stag. To what we have just said it is proper to add that the Indo-European peoples early attributed religious and mythological significance to the bull, and that a number of tribes took the bull as eponym.[48] Certain gods are tauromorphic or are accompanied by bulls. The mythico-ritual scenarios and their related symbolisms persist for millennia. As in the myths, the bull in folklore symbolizes redoubtable strength, courage, agressiveness. To cite but one example, we have only to read J. Weisweiler's account of the role of the bull in Irish folklore.[49] On the other hand, in the same folklore the hero is compared to the stag, and in the topography of Gaul names deriving from "stag" are more numerous than those whose origin is the term designating the bull.[50] J. Weisweiler has even succeeded in distinguishing two cultures in Celtic tradition: that of the bull, Mediterranean in origin and pastoral in structure, and that of the stag, of northern Eurasiatic origin and elaborated by the prehistoric hunters. Obviously, both cultures are pre-Indo-European.

We shall return to this problem. For the moment we will note how greatly these two archaic "cultures" reciprocally influenced each other in western Europe. The stag and the bull already appear in the rock drawings of Iberia and Liguria.[51] And on the Gundestrup caldron the god is represented between a stag and a bull. In the Irish texts it is sometimes difficult to decide if a stag or a bull is in question. The stag is called "wild ox" (*oss allaid, dam allaid, ag allaid*), the doe "wild cow" (*bó allaid*), and the fawn "wild

48. Von Kienle, "Tier-Völkernamen bei indogermanischen Stämme," pp. 55–57.

49. J. Weisweiler, "Vorindogermanischen Schichten der irischen Heldensage" (*Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 24 [1954]: 10–55, 165–97), pp. 28 ff. On the role of the bull in the Celtic religions cf. Jan de Vries, *La Religion des Celtes* (Paris, 1963), pp. 184–88.

50. Weisweiler, "Vorindogermanischen Schichten," p. 193.

51. Franz Altheim, *Italien und Rom* 1 (1941): 82.

calf" (*loeg allaid*).[52] And from the fifth to the eighth centuries the ecclesiastical authorities denounce and stigmatize *cervulum seu vitulum facere,* that is, peasant rites involving masks and disguises representing deer and bulls.[53]

RELIGIOUS ROLE OF THE STAG

All this shows how complex the problem is. From prehistory on, different religious cults and systems reciprocally influenced one another. Symbioses and syncretisms took place long before the period of the "great encounters" between religions. Beginning with the Neolithic period, if not already from the Upper Paleolithic, it is difficult to find religious concepts that are "pure," that is, completely independent of earlier and contemporary religious creations. Let us take, for example, the role of the stag in the mythologies and religions of Eurasia. The entire problem is immense and goes far beyond the area of our investigation. But it is important that we know the religious background of a myth such as that of the arrival of the Huns in Europe. Weisweiler, following F. R. Schroeder, pointed out that the cult of the stag extends eastward as far as China and Japan and southward as far as Italy (Val Camonica; Diana of Nemi, etc.), Illyria, Greece (Artemis), the Black Sea, the Caucasus, and Asia Minor (the Hittite storm god riding a stag, etc.).[54] We shall return to the mythologies of the stag in central Asia and Siberia, especially emphasizing some Indian

52. Weisweiler, "Vorindogermanischen Schichten," p. 194.

53. Ibid., p. 193, with the references in n. 4. The bibliography on *cervulum facere* is immense. We shall return to this problem elsewhere.

54. Ibid., pp. 191 ff.; F. R. Schroeder, *Skadi und die Götter Skandinaviens* (Tübingen, 1941), pp. 90 ff., cf. also J. Wiesner, "Zum Hirsch in der Frühzeit" (*Pisciculi,* Festschrift für F. J. Dölger [Münster i. W., 1939]), p. 309 f.; Helmut Rosenfeld, "Die Dioskuren als leuchŏ pôlo und die Alkes 'Elchreiter' der Vandalen" (*Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 89 [1940]: 1 ff.); Rosenfeld, "Die vandalischen Alkes 'Elchreiter,' der Ostgermanische Hirschkult und die Dioskuren" (*Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift* 28 [1940]: 245 ff.); cf. also Jan de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte* 1 (2d ed., 1956): 363 ff., and the studies by O. Höfler and Karl Hauck referred to in nn. 55 and 60. On the cults of the stag among the Celts cf. de Vries, *La Religion des Celtes,* pp. 112 ff., 181 ff. The stag as mythical ancestor among the Celts, O. Höfler (n. 55), 40 (with bibliography).

myths that are too seldom cited in connection with our theme. For the moment, let us recall that masks of cervids are documented in Europe from the most remote ages down to modern times.[55] The celebrated Paleolithic "sorcerer" depicted in the Trois Frères cave (Ariège) is represented with a stag's head surmounted by immense antlers.[56] And a slate plaque from Lourdes shows an engraved figure of a man with a headdress of antlers and with the tail of a horse.[57] The hunting and killing of stags appear in Bronze Age rock drawings in Sweden.[58] In the *Edda* the stag is related to Odin and the World Tree.[59] A stag decorates the apex of the iron standard found in the ship burial at Sutton Hoo (Suffolk) and dating from the seventh century.[60] The role of the stag as funerary animal and guide of the dead in the otherworld is amply documented in Germanic traditions.[61] The dead are sometimes believed to appear in stag form.[62] And indeed there is a custom of wrapping the dead in stag hides,[63] certainly because of the animal's psychopompic function.

55. See the bibliographies given by Leopold Schmidt, *Masken in Mitteleuropa* (Vienna, 1955), p. 25, nn. 92–100; Otto Höfler, *Siegfried, Arminius und die Symbolik* (Heidelberg, 1960), pp. 32 ff. and notes 66–94.

56. The drawing has often been reproduced; see, most recently, J. Marringer, *L'homme préhistorique et ses dieux* (Paris, 1958), fig. 19, and S. Giedion, *The Beginnings of Art* (New York, 1962), figs. 340–41, pp. 504–5. It probably depicts a "Master Sorcerer," representing the Lord of the Animals, for he has the face of an owl, the ears of a wolf, the long beard of a chamois, and the tail of a horse. The "sorcerer" is dancing, with his eyes fixed on the various species of animals incised in the rock.

57. Marringer, *L'homme préhistorique*, fig. 31 (after Breuil).

58. Cf. Oscar Almgren, *Nordische Felszeichnungen als religiöse Urkunden* (Frankfurt a. M., 1934), pp. 110, 125, etc.

59. *Grímnismâl*, 26; Schröder, *Skadi und die Götter Skandinaviens*, pp. 48 ff.

60. Karl Hauck, "Herrschaftzeichen eines Wodanistischen Königtums" (*Jahrbuch für Frankische Landesforschung* 14 [1954]: 9–66), pp. 19 ff. Standards and insignia decorated with stags occur with some frequency among the ancient Germans; cf. Höfler, *Siegfried, Arminius und die Symbolik*, pp. 45 ff. Bronze stags' heads mounted on poles are also documented among the Scythians; cf. A. Salmony, "An Unknown Scythian Find in Novocherkask" (*Eurasia Septentrionalia Antiqua* 10 [1936]: 54–60, figs. 1–5). See also N. Tchlenova, "Le cerf scythe" (*Artibus Asiae* 26 [1963]: 27–70).

61. Cf. the bibliographical references in Hauck, "Herrschaftzeichen," p. 20, and Höfler, *Siegfried, Arminius und die Symbolik*, p. 45.

But its funerary role is not the most important aspect of the stag. Its solar character is equally well documented. In a thirteenth-century Icelandic poem the "solar stag" is described with its hoofs on the earth and its antlers touching the sky.[64] As we shall see, the golden stag is also known in India. In old Russian folk beliefs the sun is conceived to be a flaming stag running across the sky.[65] These indications may suffice for the present. We will have occasion to complete the European documentation of the stag later on.

Weisweiler holds that the cults and myths of the stag originated in northern Europe.[66] According to him, the Indo-Europeans took them from the "Hyperboreans" who inhabited those regions in prehistoric times. In proof of such influences he cites Arctic words surviving in Celtic languages.[67] We shall not discuss this hypothesis as a whole. However, we will note that the stag already had a religious role among the Paleolithic hunters of France (the Trois Frères cave, etc.). In other words, as Weisweiler holds, the stag is documented in relation to the culture of the Paleolithic hunters; but these were not originally "Hyperboreans." Insofar as it is justifiable to speak of a "Hyperborean" culture, it was probably the heir, directly or indirectly, of the Franco-Cantabrian culture of the Upper Paleolithic period. The conditions having remained the same in general as those of the Glacial period, the "Hyperborean" hunters had carried on, in the northern and Arctic re-

62. W. E. Peuckert, in *Handwörterbuch d. deutschen Aberglaubens* 4: 93 ff.; Höfler, *Siegfried, Arminius und die Symbolik*, p. 44.

63. Ibid., p. 45 and n. 147.

64. Weisweiler, "Vorindogermanischen Schichten," p. 191.

65. O. Schrader and A. Nehring, *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde* 1 (Berlin-Leipzig, 1917–23): 503 ff.

66. Weisweiler, "Vorindogermanischen Schichten," p. 196.

67. Ibid., pp. 196–97.

gions, a culture that had disappeared in the south in consequence of the change in climate. Hence, if Weisweiler is perhaps right in concluding that the Indo-Europeans took the "stag culture" from the "Hyperboreans," and disseminated it in the south and the west, he is certainly wrong in considering it a northern creation. Northern Europe received and preserved, adapted and enriched, a spirituality that had already enjoyed a brilliant creative period in the Franco-Cantabrian Paleolithic.

THE STAG HUNT IN INDIA

Similar phenomena are found in other periods and in different milieus. Let us examine the myths of the stag hunt in India and compare them with the similar myths of central Asia. We shall see in what way an archaic and extremely widespread myth is reinterpreted and re-evaluated in different religious contexts. In Indian literature *śarabha* designates both a fabulous animal and a cervid. The *Dhūmakāri-jātaka* (no. 413 of the Pali *Jātaka*) tells of the herd of *śarabha* that, tormented by flies, come to a goatherd's fire that was giving off a thick smoke.[68] On the contrary, the *Sarabhaminga-jātaka* (no. 483) relates the following story: King Brahmadatta goes hunting with his attendants. A *śarabha* comes out of a covert. "These animals are marvelously skilled in avoiding arrows. This one drops to the ground to let the King's arrow pass over it, then resumes running." Brahmadatta follows it for a long time. Arriving at a pit full of dirty water, the *śarabha* goes around it, but the king plunges in. The *śarabha*, which was none other than a reincarnation of the Boddhisattva, rescues the man who had meant to kill it and teaches him the Law. On another day the king goes to his park to shoot with the bow. Just as he is aiming at the target, Sakka, the king of the gods, makes the image of the *śarabha* appear, and Brahmadatta refrains from loosing his arrow. He says that his gratitude for its kind deed will not let him kill the *śarabha*. "It is not a game animal," Sakka replies, "it is an Asura.

68. Jean Przyluski, "Un ancien peuple du Penjab: les Salva" (*Journal Asiatique* 214 [1929]: 311–54), p. 321.

If you killed it you would become the sovereign of the gods." But the king persists in his resolve, whereupon Sakka praises him and wishes him long life and apotheosis after his death.[69]

The *śarabha*, then—and this is important—proves to be not an ordinary game animal but an Asura, a being that is at once divine and demonic. Whoever kills it becomes equal to the king of the gods. A similar tradition was preserved in Brahmanic circles. In the *Mahābhārata* (1. 65. 1. 2534, and 1. 67. 1. 2663) Sarabha is the name of an Asura of which the hermit-king Paurava is the incarnation. "In the *Purāṇas* the Asura Sarabha is a redoubtable eight-legged monster, stronger than a lion and Viṣṇu's enemy."[70]

In a tale from the Vinaya of the Mahāsaṃghikas there is a somewhat different myth. A stag the color of gold flies northward through the air. The wife of the king of Benares sees it and wants its skin for a cushion. A hunter sets out for the north and arrives at the Snowy Mountains. A rishi reveals to him that a "gold-colored king of the stags" often comes flying to perch on a tree. The hunter lies in ambush and sees the king of the stags coming through the air. "Its body gave out a light that illuminated the mountain gorges." The hunter succeeded in capturing it in a net and brought it to the queen. "She began jumping for joy. Carried away by the intensity of her affection, she advanced and held the king of the stags clasped in her arms, but because her heart was polluted the king of the stags instantly disappeared. The queen said: 'This stag is now only a beast without beauty; turn it loose, and let it depart.'"[71]

We would emphasize the solar character of the king of the stags and its relations with the queen, a theme that deserves special study. For the moment, let us cite another myth of Indian origin, pre-

69. Ibid., pp. 322–23; Pali *sarabha* = Sanskrit *śarabha*.

70. Ibid., p. 323; Przyluski considers that *sarabha*, which originally designated an animal species, the emblem of the Salva tribe, designated a fabulous and divine beast when the Salva became the royal clan of the confederation (p. 325). This explanation, in the best evolutionistic tradition, is not convincing.

71. Translated by E. Chavannes, *Cinq cents contes*, no. 341, reprinted in Przyluski, "Un ancien peuple du Penjab: les Salva," pp. 337–38.

served in the Siamese chronicle *Suvaṇṇa Khamdëng.*[72] One day Visukamma (= Viśvakarman, the divine artisan) changed himself into a Tharai Khăm, that is, a golden stag, and remained in King P'raya Côraṇī's pleasure grounds. The king tried in vain to capture the golden stag. Then he ordered his son Suvaṇṇa Khamdëng to hunt it and capture it alive. Suvaṇṇa "assembled an army of twenty thousand men, thirty-two of the most agile and swift of whom he chose, naming them hunters, and having their heads bound with high turbans the shape of the Tharai's ears and horns. He had them put on loincloths the color of the animal, with their ends fastened so that they hung down like a stag's tail. Each of the others took a snare." The pursuit continued for two or three months, but without success. When the army slept the golden stag slept too. "Whenever they were about to catch it, it vanished from sight again. It waited for them, and when they approached it ran on." Then the prince asked his father for reinforcements. The hunt was resumed with a great army, and the stag was driven to the foot of Mount Doi Ang Salong. There a woman named Nag In Láo[73] came out to see the prince. She fell in love with him, invited him into the cave in which she lived, and "they tasted the pleasure of love." After camping at this place for a long time, the army set off again and, marching through the forests, arrived at the foot of Mount Usupabatta. There the golden stag disappeared and was not seen again. A camp was made in this place, and Prince Suvaṇṇa was lodged at the center of it.

We will note the essential elements: (1) a divine being changes into a golden stag and lingers in the king's own pleasure grounds, as if to incite him; (2) the king, unable to capture it, orders his son to do so; (3) the prince sets out with a large army, guided by thirty-two hunters disguised as stags; (4) although the golden stag always remains in sight, it proves to be unconquerable; (5) the prince falls

72. *Annales du Siam, première partie; Suvaṇṇa Khamdëng, Suvaṇṇa K'ôm Kham, Sinhanavati,* trans. Camille Notton (Paris, Limoges, Nancy, 1926), pp. 3–6. The story abounds in Indian names. See also Pryzluski, "Un ancien peuple du Penjab: les Salva," pp. 343 ff.

73. Nang = Lady; In = Indra; Lao = to cut, to shape (Notton, *Annales du Siam,* p. 5, n. 3).

in love with a woman of the country and lies with her; (6) he remains in the region for a long time, but the stag waits for him; (7) finally the prince and his army resume the hunt, but when they arrive at the foot of a mountain the stag disappears. Most probably the thirty-two hunters disguised as stags reflect the memory of a men's society that practiced certain rites (*cervulum facere*). The behavior of the stag appears to have significance: it lets itself be hunted over an immense territory, and does not disappear until the border of it is reached. It is as if it wanted to force the prince to perform a "foundation ritual." And in fact we learn later that the prince became a most powerful sovereign, an incarnation of the mythical Boar. The erotic episode falls within the same schema of sovereignty: the future king unites with a woman "of the country," that is, with a reflection in folklore of the divinities of the soil, the incarnation of *autochthony.* "Was not this hunt," Przyluski asks, "a rite making it possible to rise from the condition of rajah to that of supreme sovereign? If this is so, it would explain the puzzling formula in Jātaka no. 483, according to which he who captures a *śarabha* acquires the power of the king of the gods, in other words, obtains universal dominion."[74] Przyluski has clearly seen the relation between hunting a *śarabha* and obtaining universal sovereignty. But in India as elsewhere, this ritual hunt can serve various ends.

Camille Notton cites a Wa tradition according to which Mang Rai was pursuing a golden stag when he conquered the territory of Xieng-Tŭng.[75] "Another legend in the chronicle of Xieng Măi credits the same Mang Rai with having followed a doe and her white fawn when he set out in search of the place to found the city of Xieng Măi."[76] So both in India itself and in the Hinduized regions we find hunting a miraculous cervid (*śarabha,* golden stag, etc.) connected with (1) the conquest of a territory (or the founding of a kingdom); (2) the founding of a city; (3) obtaining universal sovereignty; (4) a decisive experience, a sort of *metanoia* or religious conversion (cf. the Stag-Boddhisattva).

74. Pryzluski, "Un ancien peuple du Penjab: les Salva," pp. 344–45.

75. *Gazeteer* 1: 518, cited by Notton, *Annales du Siam,* p. 4, n. 2.

76. Ibid., p. 4, n. 2.

These values and functions do not exhaust the Indian mythology of the stag. We have already referred to the demonic character of the *śarabha* in the Purāṇas. In a famous episode in the *Rāmāyaṇa* (3. 40. 48. 49) Marīcha, possessed by a demon, is changed into a golden stag with four golden antlers set with pearls, and lures Rāma to pursue him. Sītā is thus left alone, and Rāvana is finally able to carry her off.[77]

The ambivalent character of the stag will engage our attention later. We may add that its myths and legends constantly circulated from people to people and from continent to continent. The variant presenting the Boddhisattva changed into a *śarabha* in order to convert the hunter-king is probably the source for one of the most popular of Christian legends, the conversion of Saint Eustace. The Roman general Placidus, a rich but charitable idolator, was passionately addicted to hunting. One day when he was out hunting with his attendants he came upon a magnificant stag and pursued it to the top of a rock. There, while Placidus was admiring its majesty, he saw a cross between its antlers, and the stag spoke to him with a human voice, saying that it was the Christ whom Placidus unknowingly honored.[78] The story goes back, through Arabic and Pahlavi versions, to Sanskrit sources.[79] But if Christ could be assimilated to the stag, it was because, in ancient Greece if not even earlier, the stag already symbolized the periodic and universal *renovatio*, precisely because of the periodic renewal of its antlers.[80] In other words, at the "origin" of a legend we always

77. According to J. Darmsteter, *Revue des Études Juives* 2 (1881): 300–302, this story entered Jewish religious folklore by way of Persia: King David hunts a stag and comes to the land of the Philistines, where he is taken prisoner by Goliath's brother. Cf. M. B. Ogle, "The Stag-Messenger Episode" (*American Journal of Philology* 37: 387–416), pp. 412 ff.

78. *Acta Sanctorum* 6: 123 ff. (20 September). The episode is discussed at length by Pschmadt, *Die Sage von der verfolgten Hinde*, pp. 45 ff., who also studies the parallel legends of Saint Hubert and Saint Julian the Hospitaller.

79. Cf. Gerould, in *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 19 (1904): 335 ff.; Ogle, "The Stag-Messenger Episode," p. 411.

80. Cf. H. C. Peuch, "Le Cerf et le serpent" (*Cahiers archéologiques* 4 [1949]: 17–60), pp. 29 ff. The same symbolism is documented in proto-

find an archaic spiritual universe that not only preceded it but, more importantly still, prepared its appearance and its "success."

INDO-ARYANS, FINNO-UGRIANS, ALTAIANS

As for the myths describing the hunting of a stag that are documented among the nomadic peoples of central Asia,[81] they are certainly of a piece with their art, in which the dominant motif is provided by hunting scenes: stags at a flying gallop, winged griffons killing ibexes, predators springing on ibexes and stags, and so on. Andreas Alföldi[82] and Franz Altheim[83] have more than once emphasized the relations between the animal art of the Asiatic nomads and their origin myths and myths of conquest (*Landnahme-saga*). In a preceding chapter we have shown the archaism of this mythico-ritual ensemble in which the ancestor is a carnivore, the exemplary model both for the hunter and for the invincible warrior.[84] Studied from this point of view, the hunt in which the cervid leads the hunters to discover and conquer a territory can be interpreted as the reactualization of an origin myth: the mythical ancestor—that

historical China, in the Altai, in certain Central and North American cultures (especially among the Maya and the Pueblo); cf. C. Hentze, *Comment il faut lire l'iconographie d'un vase en bronze chinois de la période Chang* (Conferenze I. S. M. E. O., vol. I [Rome, 1951]: 1–60); Hentze, *Bronzegerät, Kultbauten, Religion im ältesten China der Shang-Zeit* (Antwerp, 1951), pp. 210 ff. See also M. Eliade, *Images et Symboles* (Paris, 1951), p. 216, n. 5.

81. Cf., among others, W. Eberhard, *Lokalkulturen im alten China. Part I: Die Lokalkulturen des Nordens u. Westens* (Leiden, 1942), pp. 78 ff.; S. Szyszman, "Le roi Bulan et le problème de la conversion des Khazars" (*Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 33 [1957]: 71 ff.).

82. See especially "Theriomorphe Weltbetrachtung in der Hochasiatischen Kulturen" (*Archaeologische Anzeiger* [1931]) cols. 393–418; Alföldi, *Der frührömische Reiteradel und seine Ehrenabzeichen* (Baden-Baden, 1952).

83. Cf. especially *Weltgeschichte Asiens im griechischen Zeitalter* 2 (Halle, 1948): 297 ff.; *Literatur und Gesellschaft im ausgehenden Altertum* 2 (1950): 15 ff.; *Attila und die Hunnen* (Baden-Baden, 1951), pp. 76 ff.; *Niedergang der Alten Welt* 1 (1952): 320 ff.; *Geschichte d. Hunnen* 1: 230 ff.

84. See above, chap. 1. Cf. also Eugène Lozovan, "Du nom ethnique des Daces" (*Revue Internationale d'Onomastique* 13 [1961]: 27–32).

is, the carnivore—pursues a cervid and conquers the future home of his descendants. As we should expect, the peoples of the Eurasian steppes, inhabiting regions peripheral to the centers of high civilization, longer preserved archaic traditions of this kind.[85] But this does not mean that other ethnic groups did not have similar traditions, or that the nomads of the Eurasian steppes did not receive and assimilate certain elements of higher culture, even before they reached the frontiers of the Roman, Persian, and Chinese empires, which they were to attack soon afterward.

F. Altheim, following H. Jacobson, points out that the term *śarabha* is preserved in Vogul **šuorp, *šorp,* "elk."[86] And, just as in India the *śarabha* is a miraculous eight-footed cervid, the enemy of the lion and the elephant, among the Voguls the elk (*šuorp*) is a redoubtable animal sent down from the sky. In a Vogul poem men implore Numi Tārem, the celestial Father, to change the elk into a four-footed beast; otherwise it will destroy the human race.[87] As Altheim remarks, the Ugrians have preserved not only the words but also the mythical representations of Aryan times.[88]

As for the characteristic motif of the animal art of the steppes, it is not a creation of the Paleo-Siberian peoples either. A relief found at Tell-Halaf—that is, within the limits to which influence from the Aryans of Mitanni extended—and dating from the eleventh century B.C. shows an elk attacked by a carnivore. But the latter is of a species unknown in Hither Asia: it is a *gulo gulo,* a carnivore that lives only in the northern part of Eurasia.[89] A similar

85. This is the "Gesetz von der Erhaltung des Alten an der Peripherie," stated R. Merkelbach, "Spechtfahne und Stammessage der Picentes," p. 520.

86. H. Jacobsohn, *Arier und Ugrofinnen* (1932), p. 57; Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen* 1: 232. Nor is this the only Aryan word taken over by the Ugrians; cf., for example, Mordvinian *azoro,* "Lord," from the Indo-Iranian **asura;* Jacobsohn, *Arier und Ugrofinnen,* pp. 38, 138; Altheim, *Geschicte der Hunnen* 1: 230.

87. B. Munkácsi, cited by Altheim, ibid., pp. 232–33. A German translation of the Vogul poem was published by Altheim, *Niedergang der Alten Welt* 1 (Frankfurt, 1952): 235 ff.

88. *Geschichte der Hunnen* 1: 233.

89. See the bibliography in ibid., pp. 234 ff.

scene appears on the felt carpet from Noïn Ula (in Outer Mongolia): a winged predator (like the fabulous carnivores of the Ostyaks) flings itself on an elk. Some of the fabrics from Noïn Ula are known to derive from the Greco-Sarmatian region of southern Russia or from Syria; others derive from China. As for the carpet with the scene of the fight between elk and carnivore, its style suggests the animal fights in the Sarmatian art of southern Russia, but even more the gold plaques of western Siberia.[90] The animal art of the steppes appears to have originated in southern Russia, that is, in the Caucasus, and, as René Grousset is inclined to believe, finally depends on the Mesopotamian world.[91]

It is obviously an art that is bound up with a particular religious conception and a particular mythology. Summing up the findings of scholarship in regard to the motif we are studying—that is, the hunt for some cervid that leads to the discovery of a territory—Altheim identifies its constituent elements among the Indo-Aryans: the name *śarabha* preserved by the Ugrians; the earliest plastic representation on reliefs found in the region occupied by the Mittanians. In other words, from the earliest times the nomadic peoples of central and northern Asia borrowed these mythico-religious elements from their neighbors, the Indo-Aryans.[92] But on their way down into India the Aryans forgot the original motif (the theme of the carnivore pursuing a cervid), whereas the Ugrians and the Altaians preserved it and gave it new vigor.[93] On the other hand, as we have seen, the myth of the *śarabha* also received new interpretations and a new lease of life in India—another proof of the exceptional richness that enables this mythico-

90. See the present state of studies and the bibliography in ibid., pp. 236 ff. The discussions by R. Grousset, in his *L'Empire des Steppes* (Paris, 1939), pp. 42–52, 623 ff., remain the best introduction to the study of the animal art of the steppes.

91. Ibid., p. 625.

92. Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen* 1: 237.

93. Among the Tatars and the Chuvash the name of the elk or the domesticated elk is *bulan,* from *bulmaq,* "to find," with the suffix *n,* that is, "he who finds"; cf. H. Grégoire (*Byzantion* 12 [1937]: 261), cited by Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen* 1: 239. But it is difficult to decide if it is a case of an old, forgotten myth.

ritual scenario to be used in many contexts and for various purposes.

As for the Hunnish version of the *Landnahme-saga*, it is certainly not the earliest, as Alföldi, A. H. Krappe, and other authors believed it to be. Altheim has recently discovered what he calls the *Urbild* of all the versions in a legend narrated by the Greek grammarian Agatharchides of Cnidus, who lived at the beginning of the second century B.C. According to this legend, lions had chased the Persian Erythras' horses across the Red Sea to an island. Erythras followed the horses and their herdsmen, and founded a city on the island.[94] As we see, the story clearly attributes the discovery of the new territory to an actual hunt, not to an animal guide. The archaism of the legend is reinforced by the fact that the hunters are carnivores (lions). The reference to the founding of a city in no way indicates a late date, for in that part of the world cities were known even from protohistorical times.[95]

When we are dealing with religious beliefs and cultural values common to the Eurasian nomads and the peoples of eastern Europe, we must bear two series of facts in mind: (1) the cultural analogies between the ancient Iranians and the Turco-Mongols; (2) the late Iranian influences (Sassanian and post-Sassanian) on certain Eurasian peoples before their irruption into the Roman and Germanic world. Karl Meuli has admirably illuminated the resemblances between the techniques of the hunt and of war among the Iranians and the Turco-Mongols.[96] The Swiss scholar

94. Agatharchides, *De mari Erythraeo*, 5, (G. G. M. 1 [1885]: 113), cited by Altheim, *Geschichte d. Hunnen* 5: 393. Erythras lived during the winter at Pasargades, but during the summer by the Red Sea (which originally designated the Persian Gulf).

95. The ritual hunt, undertaken to find the site for a new village, is still performed by certain African peoples; cf. Helmut Straube, *Die Tierverkleidungen der afrikanischen Naturvölker* (Wiesbaden, 1955), pp. 83–84. We may add that the African data can throw light on certain aspects of our problem. For in Africa it is possible to follow the continuity of the "ritual hunt"—in relation to initiation, secret societies, sovereignty—from the most archaic phases (hunter cultures) down to the pastoral and agrarian cultures. Cf. Straube, pp. 198 ff. and passim.

96. Karl Meuli, "Ein altpersischer Kriegsbrauch" (*Westöstliche Abhandlungen. Festschrift für Rudolph Tchudi* [Wiesbaden, 1954], pp. 63–86, with an extensive bibliography).

concludes that the common element is one that is specifically characteristic of the cultures of the warrior-herders of central Asia, that is, of horse-breeding peoples.[97] Meuli leaves the question of possible Assyrian influences open.[98] However it may be answered, the resemblances among the different horse-breeding peoples should serve to warn us against accepting too rigid an explanation based on Turco-Ugrian influences on the peoples of central and eastern Europe. Certain cultural elements supposed to have been brought by the Eurasian nomads may really be of Iranian origin, in other words, may precede the great invasions at the beginning of the Christian era by as much as eight or ten centuries.

This is all the more true because some of these steppe peoples had been subjected to strong influences from Sassanian culture.[99] Thus A. Maurodinov has well demonstrated to what an extent the proto-Bulgarian treasure of Nagyszentmiklós shows the influence of Sassanian art. Maurodinov concludes from this that Sassanian art had acted on the ancestors of the proto-Bulgarians and that its action was transmitted to them by their own artistic tradition.[100] On the other hand, the excavations at Kopeny on the Yenisei (some 185 miles southwest of Krasnoyarsk) have brought to light gold vessels of the eleventh and tenth centuries that show post-Sassanian influences of the same type.[101] This is as much as to say that, in the last analysis, the invaders brought to eastern Europe a culture in which the archaic inheritance of the Eurasian hunter-warriors

97. Ibid., p. 77.

98. Ibid., p. 82.

99. On the radiation of Sassanian culture see Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen* 5: 195 ff., who also discusses the most recent critical literature on the problem.

100. N. Maurodinov, "Le Trésor Protobulgare de Nagyszentmiklós" (*Archaeologia Hungarica* 29 [Budapest, 1943]), pp. 210 ff.; Altheim, *Geschichte der Hunnen* 5: 253 ff.

101. A. L. Mongaït, *Archaeology in the U. S. S. R.* (translated and adapted by M. W. Thompson [Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1961]), p. 261 and pl. 20 a. Altheim also cites other examples of proto-Bulgarian art of Iranian origin; cf. *Geschichte der Hunnen* 5: 259, 285.

had undergone the influence of elements from Sassanian, Byzantine, Aegean, and even Germanic culture.

In all of Europe, but especially in the southeast, different ethnic groups, religions, and cultures encountered, challenged, and mutually influenced one another at least three millennia before the era of the great invasions. Dacia was preeminently the country of such encounters. From prehistory down to the dawn of modern times, eastern and Aegean influences never ceased there. On the other hand, in the formation of the Geto-Dacian people and civilization Iranian (Scythian) and, more especially, Celtic elements played an important part; it was as the result of such influences and symbioses that the Thraco-Cimmerian substratum received the distinctive cultural aspect that differentiates it from the cultures of the Balkan Thracians. Finally, the Roman colonization brought the immense Latin contribution, together with the contributions of Hellenism in its syncretistic phase.

It was necessary to repeat these well-known facts because their action is not taken into account when certain archaic religious realities or certain creations of folklore are to be interpreted. In short, the constituent mythological elements of the legend of Dragoş were already present in eastern *Romania.* We have cited their parallels in the Italic, Celtic, Mediterranean, and Oriental traditions. We have demonstrated their *archaism.* This point is important, for archaic religious behavior patterns and ideas are not preserved only in the marginal zones of the Oikoumene, but also in certain especially conservative regions, such as the Carpathians, the Balkans, the Alps, the Pyrenees. The paradox of Dacia—and, in general, of the entire Balkan Peninsula—lies in the fact that it is at once a "crossroads" where different influences come together, and a zone of conservation, as is proved by the elements of archaic culture that have survived there down to the beginning of the twentieth century. In other words, it must not be supposed that the arrival of a wave of higher culture obliterated the earlier forms of culture simply by its "success." Such a phenomenon occurs only in modern times, and more especially on the plane of material culture, and even there the "acculturation" is never definitive.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We must dwell for a moment on certain results of our investigation.

(1) To whatever extent the earliest Romanian chroniclers were influenced by the Hungarian tradition of Hunor and Magor, it can only have been stylistically. Even if the legend of Dragoş was rehandled to fit the Hungarian pattern, it cannot have been taken over *in toto* by the earliest Romanian chroniclers. From the structural point of view, the difference between the two verions is too great: stag-guide, disappearing mysteriously, in the first; aurochs hunted and killed in the second.

(2) Hence we must assume the existence of an autochthonous legend of the hunting and sacrifice of an aurochs as an ordeal of the "heroic" type. The ordeal may be connected: (*a*) with a certain type of initiation (ancient Mediterranean tauromachy; Mysteries of Mithra), or (*b*) with obtaining "sovereignty" (more precisely, a local chieftaincy), or (*c*) with the colonization of an unknown territory (foundation sacrifice). All these religious meanings of the ceremonial hunt and sacrifice of a wild animal are documented in the ancient Near East and in the Mediterranean and Roman world in the form of rituals, myths, or legends, or simply of memories surviving on the plane of folklore. The existence of a similar mythico-ritual scenario in Dacia is a problem that has not yet been solved. But it is certain that the "imaginary universes" that are the concomitants of such mythico-ritual systems were known in Dacia and in the rest of eastern Europe, for they are found in the creations of folklore.

(3) By its structure the Daco-Romanian variant is integral to a culture of hunters. But as is the case among other neighboring peoples, and first of all among the Hungarians, the "ideology" of the hunt is transformed into a pastoral "ideology." This process can be traced in other Romanian religious traditions of pre-Christian origin; for example, the rite of *cervulum facere* coexists with the ritual masquerade of the goat (*capra, brezaia*) or is replaced by it. Of the extent to which this pastoral ideology is dominant in Romanian folk culture we have a proof, among others, in the fact

that the masterpiece of Romanian poetic folklore is the "Mioritza." The essential element of the ballad is the oracular power of the sheep. But the animal-oracle is an extremely archaic belief, an inheritance from a prehistoric hunting culture surviving in a pastoral cultural complex.

(4) The "mythology of the stag" is no less well documented in Romanian folklore. But it is difficult to determine which strata are autochthonous (i.e., belong to Balkan protohistory) and what has been contributed, more recently, by Oriental legends. As everywhere in eastern Europe, the religious traditions of the Romanian folk have been built up by a series of successive alluvial deposits.

(5) We have seen that tales recounting the hunting of a cervid exist in great numbers and varieties: the hunt leads to the discovery of an unknown country, or to the infernal regions, or to an encounter with the Boddhisattva or with Christ, etc.; in other legends, which we have not studied, the hunted stag is a fairy, a witch, a demon, or the king of the realm of the dead, and lures the hunter to the otherworld, or to fairyland or a land of magic, and so on.[102] We can, however, discern the fundamental unifying element that underlies all these tales: hunting a cervid leads to a radical change in the hunter's situation or in his mode of being. There is a "breakthrough," an instantaneous change of plane: to experience it is to pass from life to death, from the profane to the sacred, from the common condition to sovereignty; it is to meet superhuman beings (fairies, magicians, sorcerers), or ghosts, gods, or demons; to pass from the steppe to fertile plains, from the larval state to full and glorious existence, from anonymity to history, or from dependence to autonomy. In all these cases the "breakthrough" establishes a new mode of existence (and this is also true of the variants in which the hero dies or enters the otherworld.) This is why these myths and legends, when they are referred to "historical" events, represent the actual *beginnings*, the *origin*, the *act of founding*, and later become the starting point and

102. Cf. W. E. Peuckert, article "Hirsch" in the *Handwörterbuch d. deutschen Aberglaubens* 4, especially cols. 93 ff. See also Karl von Spiess, *Marksteine der Volkskunst* 2 (Berlin, 1942): 73–141 (Die gejagte Hinde).

the exemplary model in the historiographies of the various nations.

(6) As we have seen, other animals have also played similar roles. It does not matter that certain variants are late, or even of "literary" origin (or were reinvented merely for etymological reasons);[103] the fact that it was found necessary to reinvent them or readapt them proves that the legends that center around an animal satisfied certain needs of the deepest psyche: they played a part in the dialectic of the human spirit, which obliges man to be present to the world, both by assuming his responsibilities in the world and by revealing his own mode of existence to himself. Now the source of all these myths, rituals, beliefs, and legends is found in an extremely archaic magico-religious concept: *it is the animal* (i.e., the magico-religious force it incarnates) *that discovers the solution to a situation from which there is apparently no escape,* it is the animal that brings about the break in a closed world, and so makes it possible to pass to a higher mode of being. To be sure, the underlying concept is prehistoric—which is not surprising when we consider that for hundreds of thousands of years man not only lived by hunting but assumed a mystical consanguinity with all animals. This primordial past has never been completely abolished. The symbols, the significations, the images that sprang up and found expression in the fabulous times when the animal represented at once the mystery of the world and the clue that made the world intelligible have long since lost their function in consciousness, for they have become useless on the plane of pragmatic daily experience. But they still survive in the universes of the imagination: dreams, fantasies, literary and artistic creations, and so on. By the same token, they are of inestimable value for our knowledge of man.

1965.

103. We have not cited examples of this kind, but a certain number of them exist in Greek antiquity; cf. Krappe, "Guiding Animals," pp. 228, 231, etc.

5

Master Manole and the Monastery of Argeş

FOLK POETRY AND RELIGIOUS FOLKLORE

In a book published in 1943, *Comentarii la Legenda Meşterului Manole* (Bucharest, Ed. Publicom, 144 pp.), we attempted a first exegesis of the spiritual universe revealed by the famous Romanian ballad of Master Manole and the Monastery of Argeş. Another study, *Manole and Construction Rites,* will pursue and develop the investigation on a larger scale, embracing matters of interest to Romanianists and Balkanologists, folklorists and historians of religions. Various reasons having so far deferred its publication, we propose, in the following pages, to indicate its general outlines and to record some of its findings.

As a subject of study, the legend of the Monastery of Argeş can be approached from different, but complementary, points of view. If we leave aside the literary imitations, translations, and adaptations of the ballad collected and published by Alecsandri—all of which belong to literary history and comparative literature—and confine our investigation strictly to the various productions that belong to folklore, several approaches suggest themselves. The first problem (1) is one of esthetics: the literary value of the various recorded versions and their possible comparison with similar folk creations of the Balkan Peninsula and Danubian Europe; (2) next comes the historical problem, with its several aspects: (*a*) the dissemination of the motif in the folklore of southeastern and Danubian Europe; (*b*) the possible borrowings and mutual influences within these cultural areas; (*c*) identification of the "center of origin" of the region in which the ballad came into existence as a poetic entity. Besides these two points of view, which are chiefly of interest to specialists in Romanian and Balkan folklore and *Stilkritik,* we must also take into account: (3) the point of view of the general folklorist, who undertakes to collect and compare similar

legends and beliefs among other European peoples, even when they have not given rise to autonomous poetic creations; (4) the point of view of the ethnologist, who considers the whole corpus of construction rites, documented practically everywhere in the world, and attempts to find their place in the various cultural structures; and finally (5), the point of view of the historian of religions, who, while using the conclusions of the folklorists and ethnologists, sets himself to rediscover the existential situation that gave rise to the ideology and rites of construction, and tries, above all, to make the theoretical universe based upon such a situation intelligible.

The researches of L. Şăineanu, M. Arnaudov, P. Skok, P. Caraman, D. Caracostea, G. Cocchiara, and D. Găzdaru have adequately advanced the study of Romanian and Balkan ballads; the details of the investigation and the relevant bibliographies will be found in their several studies.[1] For our purpose it will suffice to cite the basic document: "Mânăstirea Argeşului" (first published by Vasile

1. Lazăr Săineanu, *Studii folklorice* (Bucharest, 1896); id. (L. Sainéan), "Les rites de construction d'après la poésie populaire de l'Europe Orientale" in *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 45 (1902): 359–96; M. Arnaudov, "Văgradena nevĕsta," in *Sbornik za narodni umotvorenija i narodopis* 34 (1920): 245–512; Petar Skok, "Iz balkanske komparativne literature. Rumunske paralele 'zidanju Skadra,'" in *Glasnik Skopskog naučnog društva* (Skoplje, 1929), pp. 220–42; P. Caraman, "Consideratii critice asupra genezii şi răspândirii baladei Meşterului Manole în Balcani," in *Buletinul Institutului de filologie română "Alexandru Philippide"* 1 (Iaşi, 1934): 62–102; Giuseppe Morici, "La vitima dell'edifizio," in *Annali del R. Istituto superiore orientale di Napoli* 9 (1937): 177–216; D. Caracostea, "Material sud-est european şi formă românească," in *Revista Fundaţiilor regale* (December 1942), pp. 619–66 (see now *Poezia tradiţională română* 2 [Bucharest, 1969]: 185–223); G. Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta e i sacrifici di costruzione," in *Annali del Museo Pitrè* 1 (Palermo, 1950): 38–81; D. Găzdaru, "Legenda Meşterului Manole," in *Arhiva* (Iaşi, 1932), pp. 88–92; Găzdaru, "Contribuţia Românilor la progresul cultural al Slavilor" 3, in *Cuget românesc,* An. 2. No. 3 (Buenos Aires, 1952): 155–59. To shorten the footnotes, we will in most cases merely give references to the bibliographies contained in our *Comentarii* and in Cocchiara's well-documented study. The learned Italian folklorist seems not to have known our book, though he mentions it (p. 71, n. 118); otherwise he would have taken into account the researches of Găzdaru, Arnaudov, and Caracostea, whose findings we used.

Alecsandri in his *Balade adunate şi îndreptate* [Iaşi, 1852]), of which an English prose translation follows:

The Ballad of Master Manole and the Monastery of Argeş

I.

Down the Argeş, through a lovely valley, comes the Black Prince with ten companions—nine great masters, apprentices, and masons, and the tenth, Master Manole, who surpasses them all. They are going together to choose a site for a monastery worthy to be remembered. And as they went along they met a poor shepherd, playing his flute. As soon as he saw him, the Prince spoke to him:

"Little shepherd, playing your flute as you lead your flock upstream, or lead your flock downstream, have you never, as you passed, seen an abandoned wall, left unfinished among pillars and hazels?"

"Yes, Lord, as I passed I have seen an abandoned wall, left unfinished. When my dogs see it, they rush to it, howling dismally."

Hearing him, the Prince is glad and quickly sets off again to find the wall, with nine masons, nine great masters, and the tenth, Manole, who surpasses them all.

"There it stands, my wall. Here I have chosen the place for my monastery. So you, great masters, apprentices, and masons, make ready now to fall to work, raising and building a high monastery, unequaled on earth. I will give you gold, I will make you noblemen. Otherwise, I will have you walled in, walled in alive, in the foundations."

II.

The masters hurried, stretched out their measures, measured the ground, dug wide trenches, worked without stopping, and raised the wall. But, work as they would, all the work they did fell during the night. And it was the same on the second day, and the third day the same, and again on the fourth day. They worked in vain. The Prince was amazed and chided them, he scowled and threatened them:

"I will bury you alive in the foundations!"

The great masters, apprentices, and masons trembled as they worked, worked as they trembled, through long summer days, from dawn to dark. But Manole, meanwhile, stopped and worked no more; he lay down to sleep and dreamed a dream. When he woke he spoke to them thus:

"Nine great masters, apprentices, and masons, do you know what I dreamed while I lay sleeping? From the sky I heard someone speaking to me thus: 'All that is built will fall at night until we decide, all of us together, to wall in the wife or the sister who at dawn tomorrow will be the first to come bringing food to her husband or her brother.' So if you want to finish this holy monastery, worthy to be remembered, we must all promise and swear to keep the secret; and the wife or sister who tomorrow at dawn will be the first to arrive, her we will sacrifice and wall her in."

III.

It is dawn, and Manole springs up. And he climbs the hoarding of branches and, higher still, up on the scaffold; and he looked across the field and searched the road. Alas, what did he see? Who was coming? It was his young wife, the flower of the fields! Nearer she came; she was bringing him food to eat, wine to drink. As soon as he saw her, his heart bounded. He fell to his knees and prayed, weeping:

"O Lord, pour down on the mountains a foaming rain that will change the streams to torrents! Make the waters rise to stop my sweetheart, make them stop her in the valley and turn her back!"

The Lord took pity on him and heard his prayer. He gathers the clouds, darkening the sky. And suddenly there falls a foaming rain that flows in streams and swells the torrents. But however hard the rain fell, it did not stop his sweetheart. On she walked, nearer and nearer. Manole sees her, and crosses himself again:

"O Lord, make a wind blow, blow over the earth! Let it strip the pines and bend the sycamores and throw down the mountains and make my sweetheart turn and go back to the valley!"

And the Lord took pity on him and made a wind blow, a wind over the earth, that bent the sycamores and stripped the pines and threw down the mountains. But Ana does not turn back.

Doubtfully she walked along the road, nearer and nearer, and then—alas for her!—she was there.

IV.

The great masters, apprentices, and masons were glad when they saw her. But Manole sadly embraces his sweetheart, takes her in his arms, and climbs the scaffold. He set her on the wall and said to her, jestingly:

"Fear nothing, my dear one, for we are going to wall you in up here, but it is only in jest."

Ana trusted him and laughed and blushed. And Manole sighed and began to raise the wall. The wall grew and buried her, up to the ankles, then to the calves. And she—poor thing!—stopped laughing and said:

"Manole, Manole, stop your jesting now, for the jest is not good, Manole, Manole, Master Manole! The wall presses me too hard and breaks my little body!"

But Manole did not answer her and went on working, the wall rose ever higher, burying her, up to the ankles, up to the calves, up to the ribs, up to the breasts. But she—poor thing!—went on weeping and speaking to him:

"Manole, Manole, Master Manole, the wall presses me too hard and crushes my breasts and breaks my child."

Manole, in a fury, worked on. And the wall rose and covered her, up to the sides, up to the breasts, up to the lips, up to the eyes. And so the poor thing was seen no more; but they heard her still, speaking from the wall:

"Manole, Manole, the wall presses me too hard, and my life is failing!"

V.

Down the Argeş, through a lovely valley, comes the Black Prince to say his prayers in the monastery, the rich building, the monastery so high, unequaled on earth. The Prince looked at it and was glad and spoke to them thus:

"You, my masters, ten great masons, tell me the truth, with your hands on your hearts, if you can build me another monastery—one in my memory, far more shining and far more beautiful!"

And the great masters, apprentices, and masons, sitting on the woodwork high on the roof, were proud and glad, and they answered him:

"Such great masters as we, masons and apprentices—there are none others on this earth. Know then, that, whenever you please, we can build another monastery, far more shining and far more beautiful."

The Prince listens and ponders. Then he orders the scaffold torn down, the ladders taken away, and the masons, the ten great masters, left to rot there on the woodwork high on the roof. The masters ponder, and they make themselves wings that fly, wings of light shingles. They spread them then and jump off into space. But they fall, and where they strike the ground their bodies are shattered. And poor Manole, Master Manole, even as he jumps he hears a voice coming out of the wall, a stifled voice, a most dear voice, sobbing and saying:

"Manole, Manole, Master Manole, the wall presses me too hard and crushes my weeping breast and breaks my child and my life is failing."

He hears it so close to him that he is bewildered. His eyes darkened, the world was spinning, the clouds came back, and from the woodwork high on the roof, he fell, dead; and where he was shattered a clear fountain sprang up, a trickle of water, salt with his tears.[2]

2. Now see Vasile Alecsandri, *Poezii populare ale Românilor* (Bucharest: Ediţie îngrijită de Gh. Vrabie, 1965), 1: 250–60, 2: 159–64 (notes and variants); A. Amzulescu, *Balade populare româneşti* (Bucharest, 1964), 3: 7–58. Cf. also Ion Taloş, "Balada Meşterului Manole şi variantele ei transilvănene" (*Revista de Folclor* 7 [1962]: 22–56; p. 41, bibliography of the variants recorded in Romania and among the Romanians in Yugoslavia); M. Pop, "Nouvelles variantes roumaines du chant du Maître Manole" (*Romanoslavica* 9 [1963]: 427–55); O. Papadima, "Neagoe Basarab, Meşterul Manole şi vânzătorii de umbre" (*Revista de Folclor* 7 [1962]: 68–78, reprinted in O. Papadima, *Literatura populară română* (Bucharest, 1968), pp. 605–18); G. Vrabie, *Balada populară română* (Bucharest, 1966), pp. 69–108; Lorenzo Renzi, *Canti tradizionali romeni* (Florence, 1969), pp. 75–86 (stylistic and esthetic analysis of the ballad). The folk traditions having to do with construction have been well analyzed recently by Ion Taloş, "Bausagen in Rumänien" (*Fabula* 10 [1969]: 196–211).

SOME BALKAN BALLADS

In the Neo-Greek ballads the construction that collapses every night is the bridge of Arta. The variant from Corcyra, used by Sainéan, shows us forty master masons and sixty journeymen working in vain for three years. A genie (*stoicheion*) finally reveals to them that the bridge cannot be finished except at a price: the wife of the chief master mason must be sacrificed. On hearing this, he faints. When he returns to his senses he writes his wife a message ordering her to dress slowly and come to him on the scaffold, but still so slowly that she will not arrive until late, about noon. He gives his message to a bird; but the bird tells his wife to hurry. Finding him sad and downcast, she asks him why; the master mason tells her that he has lost his wedding ring under the bridge, and she goes down to look for it. It is then that the masons immolate her. The wife dies bemoaning her fate. They were three sisters, she laments, and all three died in the same tragic way: the eldest under the bridge over the Danube, the second under the walls of the city of Avlona, and now she, the youngest, under the Arta bridge. She ends with imprecations: may he tremble as her heart is trembling now, and may those who cross the bridge fall from it as her hair is now falling from her head.[3] In another variant the voice of an archangel announces that the master mason's wife must be immured.[4] In the version from Zakynthos the architect receives the revelation in a dream; as she dies, his wife laments that one of her sisters was immolated in the foundations of a church, another in the walls of a monastery, and she, the third, under the Arta bridge.[5] In a variant from Trebizond the master mason hears a voice asking him: "What will you give me to keep the wall from falling again?" He answers: "Mother and daughter I can have no longer, but wife I can, and perhaps I shall find a better one."[6]

3. Translations of texts and bibliographical references in Sainéan, "Les rites de construction," pp. 362–63; Arnaudov, "Văgradena nevĕsta," pp. 389 ff.; Caracostea, "Material sud-est european," pp. 628 ff.; Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," pp. 38–39. Cf. also Eliade, *Comentarii*, p. 30.

4. Ibid., p. 30; Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," p. 39.

5. Sainéan, "Les rites de construction," pp. 364–65; Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," p. 40.

6. Caracostea, "Material sud-est european," p. 629; *Comentarii*, p. 31.

There are still more cruel variants, such as the one from Thrace, in which, when the wife goes down to look for the wedding ring, the master mason calls to her: "I have it here, but you will never leave there!"[7] However, we do not intend to examine all the Neo-Greek versions, of which there are many.[8]

In the Macedo-Romanian version, *Cântilu a pontulu di Narta*, the heroes are three brothers, all master masons. A bird reveals to the eldest that he must immure the wife of the youngest. This version contains a notable detail that is lacking in both the Daco-Romanian type and the Neo-Greek variants: the victim begs that her bosom be left uncovered so that she can continue to suckle her infant.[9] This detail also appears in a variant from Herzegovina[10] (the Gypsy woman immured under the Mostar bridge), in a Bosnian version[11] (about the city of Tešang), and in nearly all the

7. Caracostea, "Material sud-est european," p. 629; *Comentarii*, p. 31.

8. More than forty, according to N. G. Politis' researches; cf. Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," p. 38, n. 3. But Gheorghios Megas recently stated that he knew 264 variants; cf. *Laografia* 18 (1959–61): 561–77. The number of neo-Greek versions and their archaism is impressive, and these elements must be taken into account in any systematic study of the genesis of the ballad. As we shall see, Cocchiara, following Politis and other scholars, is convinced that the true *humus* of the legend is in Greece, and he cites, among other reasons, the fact that the constructional sacrifice is still currently practiced in Greece, in the form of the "flight of the shade" ("Il Ponte di Arta," p. 31). The argument is not conclusive, for as Cocchiara himself remarks (pp. 46–47) the practice is extremely widespread throughout the Balkan Peninsula and in Romania. Similar beliefs and legends are also documented in Armenia (cf. H. D. Siruni, "Legenda fetiţei zidite," *Ani. Anuarul de cultură armeană* [Bucharest, 1941], pp. 243–46) and in the Caucasus (see below, p. 176, n. 28).

9. It was Kurt Schladenbach who first studied "Die aromunische Ballade von der Artabrucke," in *Jahresbericht des Instituts für rumänische Sprache* 1 (Leipzig, 1894): 79–121. The article escaped the perspicacity of Cocchiara ("Il Ponte di Arta," pp. 42–43), who, however, uses the excellent text published by V. Petrescu, *Mostre de dialectul macedo-român* 2 (Bucharest, 1880): 84–88 and the variants recorded by P. Papahagi, *Basme aromâne* (Bucharest, 1905), pp. 70 and 555.

10. Cf. *Comentarii*, p. 31 (citing Paul Sébillot, *Les travaux publics et les mines dans les traditions et les superstitions de tous les pays* [Paris, 1894], p. 93, and *La Revue des traditions populaires* 7: 691).

11. *Comentarii*, p. 31, following Friedrich S. Krauss, "Das Opfer bei den

Serbian and Bulgarian forms. These tell the following story: For ten years Master Manole, with his two brothers, has been working on the fortified city of Smilen without being able to finish it. A dream reveals to him that he must sacrifice the first wife who comes to the scaffold the next day. The three brothers swear to one another that they will not tell their wives, but only Manole keeps his oath. When his wife arrives and finds him in tears because, he says, he has lost his wedding ring, she goes down to look for it and is immured. She asks that her breast be left uncovered so that she can suckle her infant, and soon afterward a fountain of milk begins to flow from the wall.[12] A variant from Trevensko ends with Manole reflecting: "That is why it is not good to swear an oath, for a man is often mistaken."[13]

The Serbo-Croatian ballads, recorded by Vuk Stefanović Karağić at the beginning of the nineteenth century and published in his authoritative collection of popular songs, tell of three princely brothers who are building the city of Scutari. A fairy (*Vila*) destroys all their day's work during the night. She reveals to one of the brothers, Vukašin, that the city cannot be built unless they are able to find and immure the twins Stojan and Stojana.[14] For three years an emissary, Dišimir, travels over the world without finding them. Vukašin goes back to work, but still fruitlessly. This time the *Vila* reveals to them that, instead of the mythical twins, they can immure the wife of one of the brothers. The rest

Südslaven," in *Mitteilungen der anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 17 (1887):16–21; F. S. Krauss, *Volksglaube und religiöser Brauch der Südslaven* (Münster, 1890), pp. 158 ff.

12. Translations and commentaries in A. Strauss, *Bulgarische Volkslieder* (Vienna, 1895), pp. 407–8; Caracostea, "Material sud-est european," pp. 632 ff., following Arnaudov; *Comentarii*, pp. 31–32; Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," pp. 43–44. A similar song of the Bulgarian Gypsies has been analyzed by N. M. Penzer, "Song of the Bridge," in *Journal of the Gypsy-Lore Society*, 3d series, 4:110–14.

13. Arnaudov, quoted by Caracostea, "Material sud-est european," pp. 632–33.

14. On the etymological symbolism of these names (*stojati* "to stand upright") see our *Comentarii*, p. 33.

of the story follows the familiar pattern: The three brothers swear to one another that they will let their wives suspect nothing, but only the youngest, Gojćo, keeps his word, and his faithful wife ends by being immured. She begs them to leave "a little window for her breast" so that she can suckle her infant, and another window in front of her eyes so that she can see the house.[15] The ballad of the city of Scutari is also known in Albania.[16]

Finally, the Hungarian versions present twelve master masons building the city of Deva. Their leader, Clemens, decides to sacrifice the first wife who comes with food for them the next day. There are no supernatural elements (genie, fairy, archangel, dream), nor do the master masons take an oath. When the wife arrives, Clemens tells her what her fate is to be and begins to immure her. The infant cries, and the mother consoles it: "There will always be kind ladies to suckle it and kind youths to rock it."[17]

THE EXEGESES: FOLKLORISTS, HISTORIANS OF LITERATURE, *STILKRITIKER*

Every national type of ballad comprises an original structuring of its various dramatic, psychological, and literary elements. A comparative study must analyze them meticulously, not only from the point of view of the life of the narrative but also on the plane of stylistics and literary quality. It is obviously risky—not to say presumptuous—to pronounce upon the artistic value of each national type; such a judgment would presuppose not only a thorough knowledge of Hungarian, Romanian, and all the Balkan languages, but also a profound familiarity with their folk literatures and their

15. Cf. texts and bibliographies in *Comentarii*, pp. 32–34; Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," pp. 46–48. The variants are recorded in the article by S. Stefanović, "Die Legende vom Bau der Burg Skutari" (*Revue internationale des Études Balkaniques* 1 [1934]:188 ff.).

16. Cf. Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," pp. 49–50.

17. Cf. Sainéan, "Les rites de construction," pp. 392 ff.; Arnaudov, "Văgradena nevĕsta," pp. 413 ff.; Caracostea, "Material sud-est european," pp. 640 ff.; *Comentarii*, p. 34. Now see Lajos Vargyas, *Researches into the medieval history of folk ballad* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiado, 1967), pp. 173–233: "The origin of the walled-up wife."

individual esthetics. Even so, certain general conclusions emerge from the mere treatment of the ballad material. Sainéan summarized the results of his comparative studies as follows: "From the point of view of beauty and comparative originality, the Serbian and Romanian versions take first place; the Bulgarian songs, because of their loose form, give the impression of being detached fragments; the Albanian traditions are pale imitations of the Greek or Serbian ballads, and the Macedo-Romanian song is an almost literal reproduction of one of the Neo-Greek versions; the Magyar variants seem to echo the Romanian ballad, while the Neo-Greek versions, because of certain characteristic features, seem to occupy a place apart in this group of poetic productions."[18]

In making this classification, Sainéan was thinking as much of the genesis and dissemination of the ballads as of their respective literary values. The opinions of scholars differ most in regard to their genesis. Politis, Arnaudov, Caraman, and, most recently, Cocchiara agree—though for different reasons—in locating the place of origin in Greece. Arnaudov would derive the Albanian, Bulgarian, and Macedo-Romanian ballads from the Greek type; the Serbian type from the Albanian and Bulgarian forms; the Romanian type from the Bulgarians; and the Hungarian type from the Romanians.[19] Yet Caracostea remarks that Arnaudov also speaks of polygenesis, which would militate against the rigidity of the schema he advances. On the other hand, Arnaudov himself had noted the small circulation of the ballad in northern Bulgaria. But we should expect the opposite phenomenon if that region is really the bridge by which the ballad passed into Romania.[20] However this may be, it is certain that circulation took place in both directions. D. Găzdaru found the name *Curtea*, an echo of *Curtea de Argeş*, in a Bulgarian variant, which implies that the Romanian form passed south of the Danube.[21]

18. Sainéan, "Les rites de construction," pp. 360–61.

19. Arnaudov, summarized by Caracostea, "Material sud-est european," p. 630, n.; *Comentarii*, p. 28.

20. Caracostea, "Material sud-est european," p. 630, n.; *Comentarii*, p. 29.

21. D. Găzdaru, "Legenda Meşterului Manole," in *Arhiva* (1932), pp. 88–92; Găzdaru, *Contribuţia Românilor la progresul cultural al Slavilor*, especially pp. 157–59.

Skok came to very different conclusions. In his view, the Macedo-Romanian masons played an essential part in the creation and dissemination of the ballad. The Croatian scholar observes that in all the Romanian variants the masons are regarded as beings outside the common run of mankind ("Manole is a genie who communicates with the divinity"); in addition, their trade itself condemns masons to sacrifice their families; hence their tragic fate. The poetic elaboration of this motif, Skok holds, is inconceivable except in a masonic milieu. Now the trade of mason was practiced throughout the Balkan Peninsula by Macedo-Romanians, among whom masons are called *goge;* the Macedo-Romanians had so thoroughly identified themselves with masons that the Macedo-Romanian word *goga* became, for the Serbs and Albanians, synonymous with mason.[22]

However we may judge Skok's general thesis, he was the first to call due attention to the capital role of masons in the thematization of the ritual of constructions. Down to the last century the master masons preserved "trade secrets" that are unquestionably archaic. As we shall soon see, the work of building is bound up with a ritual and a symbolism that come down to us from a very distant past. Every craft, but especially the crafts of the mason and the blacksmith, was imbued with a ritual meaning and a symbology that were accessible only to "initiates." This astonishing conservatism is partly explained by the profound echo that the different modalities of "making," "constructing," "building" have always awakened in the depths of the human soul. A whole mythology of "making" still survives, in many forms and variously disguised, in human behavior.[23]

According to Skok, the name Manole itself suffices to prove the Romanian origin of the ballad.[24] Caraman, on the contrary, comes

22. Skok, "Iz balkanaske komparativne literature," p. 241; Caracostea, "Material sud-est european," p. 624; *Comentarii*, p. 29; Găzdaru, *Contribuţia Românilor*, p. 159.

23. On this problem see my book *Forgerons et Alchimistes* (Paris: Flammarion, 1956). See also my "The Forge and the Crucible: A Postscript" (*History of Religions* 8 [1968]: 74–88).

24. Skok, "Iz balkanaske komparativne literature," pp. 225 and 245; Caracostea, "Material sud-est european," p. 625, note; Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," p. 52.

to the conclusion that this anthroponym belongs specifically to the Neo-Greek onomastic vocabulary and that it passed into Romanian with Greek phonetics.[25] The name Manole, he avers, is the symbol of the architect in Greece.[26] On the other hand, in the Serbo-Croatian versions the master mason, Rado, is called *Neimaru* or *Neimare;* and the substantive *maimare* occurs in the Macedo-Romanian and Bulgarian ballads. This word, Caraman remarks, represents Turkish *mimar,* "architect," which, by a frequent process in folk etymology, the Macedo-Romanians assimilated to Romanian *mai mare, mai marlu,* "greater."[27] In our opinion this fact at least partially confirms Skok's hypothesis concerning the role of the Macedo-Romanians in the dissemination of the ballad.

Caraman accepts Politis' thesis, though for different reasons: in the Romanian scholar's view, the archaism and thematic simplicity of the Neo-Greek ballads shows that the soil of Greece was the site of the passage from construction *ritual* to the *literary* folk creation. For Caraman, again, the perfection of the Romanian and Serbian forms is further proof that the Romanians and Serbs did not "invent" the ballad, that they only elaborated it and exploited all its artistic possibilities. Cocchiara rejects this last argument: for him, there can be no question of a literary evolution, for each song originates with its author; what is more, he seems not to be convinced of the literary superiority of the Romanian forms.[28]

25. Caraman, "Consideratii critice," pp. 95 ff.; Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," p. 52.

26. Caraman, "Consideratii critice," p. 94.

27. Ibid., p. 95; Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," p. 53, n. 46.

28. Ibid., p. 51. A new hypothesis has recently been advanced by Lajos Vargyas: according to him, the origin of the ballad is to be sought in the Caucasus, where it is documented among the Georgians (it is also found among the Mordvinians); the Magyars, who in the seventh and eighth centuries nomadized between the Caucasus and the Don, brought the ballad to Europe and transmitted it to the Bulgarians; the other Balkan peoples acquired it from the Bulgarians; cf. L. Vargyas, "Die Herkunft der ungarischen Ballade von der eingemauerten Frau" (*Acta Ethnographica* [Budapest, 1960]) and English translation, "The origin of the walled-up wife," cited above, p. 173, n. 17. The hypothesis is not convincing (see

It is to be regretted that the eminent Italian folklorist did not know Caracostea's comparative and stylistic study. In some penetrating pages Caracostea has rightly brought out the artistic qualities of the Romanian versions. For him, it is in its Romanian form that the legend fulfilled its esthetic destiny, whatever its "origin" and however frequently its southeastern European variants may occur. Caracostea rightly emphasizes the ritual nature of the beginning of the ballad *Curtea de Argeş:* the search for a propitious site to build the monastery,[29] whereas in all the other forms the action begins with the mysterious collapse of the walls during the night. The late lamented critic also shows that in the Romanian form Manole always remains at the center of the action, whereas in the Serbian ballad, for example, the accent falls on the wife and her mother love. In the Romanian ballad the woman accepts her ritual immolation with resignation and even serenely; in other versions from southeastern Europe the wife laments and curses her fate. The ballad of the Monastery of Argeş has a continuation, which, contrary to the view of certain folklorists, is not an excrescence: Manole's winged flight and his tragic death. Death in some sort restores to him the wife he has just sacrificed.

the critiques by G. A. Megas in *Laografia* 18 [1959–61]: 561–77, by G. Hadzis in *Ethnographia* 71 [1960]: 558–79, and by Adrian Fochi in *Limbă şi Literatură* 12 [1966]: 373–418). As Ion Taloş observes, Vargyas does not explain the complete absence of the ballad from Hungary (for of the 36 Hungarian variants, one was recorded in Czechoslovakia and 35 in Transylvania). In addition, the transmission of the ballad to the Bulgarians is not proven; cf. Taloş, "Balada Meşterului Manole şi variantele ei transilvănene," pp. 51–52.

29. In a note published in *Revista Fundaţiilor regale* (April 1944), pp. 213–15, Maria Golescu commented on the theme of "abandoned and unfinished walls," in the light of the fact that the Romanian voivodes and boyars were accustomed to restore ruined churches and finish those whose construction had been interrupted for many years as the result of historical vicissitudes. The author refers especially to Ion Donat, *Fundaţiile religioase ale Olteniei* 1 (Craiova, 1937), pp. 22 ff., 37 ff. Now see Ion Taloş, "Bausagen in Rumänien," especially pp. 204 ff. Cf. also D. Strömbäck, "Die Wahl des Kirchenbauplatzes in der Sage und im Volksglauben mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Schweden," *Humaniora* (Locust Valley, N. Y., 1960), pp. 37 ff.

But stylistic analysis of the ballads does not exhaust their rich content. An entire study could—and should—be made on the structure of the imaginary universes revealed by the various poetic creations. It is significant that the "construction" varies: it can be a bridge (Greece, Bulgaria, Macedo-Romanians), a city (Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Albania, Hungary), or a monastery (Romania). To be sure, the choice is in great part explained by the real existence of such works of architecture: the folk imagination was struck in one place by the presence of a bridge, in another by the building of a monastery,[30] in yet another by a city wall. But once these "real objects" have been transfigured into images, they no longer belong to the immediate universe, possess a utilitarian function. Freed from the concrete context, the images recover their specific dimensions and their primordial symbolism. But a ballad, like any other creation on the imaginary plane, no longer deals with "real objects" but with images, archetypes, symbols. Hence it would be of the utmost interest to study the different universes of our ballads from this point of view. Such a study would proceed to elucidate all the symbolic meanings of the Bridge (initiatory ordeal, perilous passage from one mode of being to another: from death to life, from ignorance to illumination, from immaturity to maturity, etc.); it would then elucidate the cosmological structure of the "City," at once *imago mundi* and "Center of the World," the sacred site where communication between Heaven, Earth, and the Underworld is possible; finally it would dwell on all the cosmological and paradisal symbolism of the Monastery, at the same time image of the Cosmos and of the Heavenly Jerusalem, of the Universe in its visible totality and of Paradise.

We must add at once that such an exegesis of images and symbols is validated today both by the history of religions and by depth psychology. In other words, the analysis of an image and the interpretation of its symbolism can deliberately disregard what consciousness of its symbolism the individual or the society that serves as the vehicle for the image may or may not possess. A symbol delivers its message and fulfills its function even when its meaning is not apprehended by *consciousness.*[31] This makes it all the more remarkable that the symbolism of the church-monastery was still perceived and culturally valorized by eastern European Christendom, the heir of Byzantium.[32] In other words, until the most recent times the people of the Balkano-Danubian area were conscious that a church or monastery represented both the Cosmos and the Heavenly Jerusalem or Paradise: there was a conscious cognition of the architectonic and iconographic symbolism present in the sacred buildings, and this cognition was effected both through religious experience (liturgy) and through the traditional culture (theology). More precisely, there was a historically recent religious re-evaluation and revivification (Christianity) of an archaic symbolism: for the sanctuary as *imago mundi* and "Center of the World" is already present in the Paleo-Oriental cultures (Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China, etc.).[33]

30. It is worth noting the importance of Curtea de Argeş and the legends crystallized around "Negru Vodă" for what could be termed the historical mythology of the Romanians.

CONSTRUCTION RITES: MORPHOLOGY AND HISTORY

The archaism of the images and symbols present in the ballads is abundantly confirmed by the practices and beliefs concerning constructional sacrifices. We know that such beliefs are found almost everywhere in Europe, though they did not give rise to a folk literature comparable to that of southeastern Europe. There is no need to rehearse them here. Since the days of Jacob Grimm, and more especially of Felix Liebrecht,[34] investigators have collected a considerable number of legends, superstitions, and customs more

31. This methodological problem is too important to be decided in a few lines. See my *Images et Symboles* (Paris: Gallimard, 1952) and my studies: "Symbolisme du 'vol magique'" *Numen* 3 (1956), pp. 1–13, reprinted in *Mythes, rêves et mystères* (Paris, 1957), pp. 133–48, and "Centre du Monde, Temple, Maison," in *Le Symbolisme cosmique des monuments religieux,* ed. G. Tucci (Rome, 1957), pp. 57–82.

32. On all this see Hans Sedlmayr, *Die Entstehung der Kathedrale* (Zürich, 1950), pp. 118 ff. and passim.

33. See my books: *Traité d'Histoire des religions* (Paris: Payot, 1949; 2d ed. 1952), pp. 315 ff.; *Le Mythe de l'Éternel retour* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), pp. 21 ff.; *Images et Symboles,* pp. 47 ff.; and the study cited above, "Centre du Monde, Temple, Maison."

34. Cf. Felix Liebrecht, *Zur Volkskunde. Alte und neue Aufsätze* (Heilbronn, 1879), pp. 284–96 ("Die vergrabenen Menschen").

or less directly based upon the rituals of construction. A far-reaching series of investigations had begun to appear in the *Revue des traditions populaires* from 1890; Paul Sébillot, G. L. Gomme, R. Andree, E. Westermarck, and others published variously oriented contributions; while Paul Sartori brought together a very rich documentation in 1898.[35] All this material was used and supplemented by us in 1943, and by Cocchiara in the study that he published in 1950.[36] At this point we will only state that the motif of a construction whose completion demands a human sacrifice is documented in Scandinavia and among the Finns, the Letts, and the Estonians,[37] among the Russians and the Ukrainians,[38] among the Germans,[39] in France,[40] in England,[41] in Spain.[42] A celebrated

35. Paul Sartori, "Ueber das Bauopfer," in *Zeitschrif für Ethnologie* 30 (1898): 1–54. See also K. Klusemann, *Das Bauopfer* (Graz-Hamburg, 1919); L. D. Burdick, *Foundation Rites, with some kindred ceremonies* (New York: Abbey Press, n.d.), a learned but chaotic work; the author is unaware of Sartori's investigations; Inger Margrette Boberg, *Baumeistersagen* (FFC, no. 151; Helsinki, 1955); cf. the articles "Bauopfer" and "Einmauern" in *Handwörterbuch d. deutschen Aberglauben.*

36. In the following notes we shall confine ourselves to citing the bibliographies contained in the studies by Sartori and Cocchiara and in our book, *Comentarii.* When the occasion arises we will cite certain works not recorded in the Italian folklorist's study.

37. Finns: Sartori, "Ueber das Bauopfer," p. 13; *Comentarii,* p. 38; Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," p. 55, n. 53. Letts: Andrejs Johansons, "Das Bauopfer der Letten" (*Arv* 18–19 [1962–63], reprinted in *Der Schirmherr des Hofes im Volksglauben der Letten* [Stockholm, 1964], pp. 55–75); Estonians: Oskar Loorits, *Grundzüge des estnischen Volksglaubens* 2, 1 (Lund, 1951), p. 136; for the dissemination of the motif see the map, p. 137.

38. Valeriu St. Ciobanu, *Jertfa zidirii la Ucraineni şi Ruşi* (Chişinău, 1930); D. Zelenin, *Russische (Ostslavische) Volkskunde* (Berlin, 1927), p. 287; *Comentarii,* p. 38; Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," p. 55, n. 51.

39. Sartori, "Ueber das Bauopfer," Jan de Vries, "De sage van het ingemetselde kind," in *Nederlandsch Tijdschrift voor volkskunde* 32 (1927): 1–13; Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," p. 55 and n. 55.

40. *Comentarii,* p. 39; Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," p. 60.

41. Ibid., pp. 58 ff.

42. A. Popescu-Telega, *Asemănări şi analogii în folklorul român şi iberic*

episode is the one reported by the Armorican monk Nennius (second half of the tenth century) in his *Historia Britonum* (chap. 18): when the fort that King Gorthigern was building fell every night, the druids advised him to pour the blood of a "fatherless" child over it, and the king did so.[43] According to the *Life of Saint Columba,* written by Saint Adamnan, a similar sacrifice was offered by Columba (Colmcille) when he built the church of Hy.[44]

It must be made clear that such beliefs and legends were dependent upon a ritual scenario: whether a human effigy or the "shade" of a victim was involved, or one of the countless forms of sacrifice by substitution (immolation of an animal on the foundations or upon first entering the house) was considered sufficient, a blood sacrifice always assured the solidity and long life of a building. This is not the place to discuss the problem of sacrifice by substitution, some aspects of which are still obscure.[45] Suffice it to say that the discovery of skeletons in the foundations of sanctuaries and palaces in the ancient Near East, in prehistoric Italy, and elsewhere puts the reality of such sacrifices beyond doubt.[46] The presence of effigies or symbols in the foundations further testifies to the various practices by which victims were substituted.

In the form of attenuated ritual, of legend, or of vague beliefs, constructional sacrifices are found almost all over the world. A considerable number of facts has been collected in modern India, where the belief certainly had a ritual reality in ancient times.[47]

(Craiova, 1927), pp. 12 ff.; *Comentarii,* p. 40; Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," p. 60, n. 77.

43. Bibliography in ibid., p. 56, nn. 57–58; add A. H. Krappe, "Un épisode de l'Historia Britonum," in *Revue Celtique* (1924), pp. 181–88; cf. also *Comentarii,* p. 40. The motif of the "fatherless" child is an independent folklore theme.

44. Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," p. 57 and n. 60.

45. See, for the present, *Comentarii,* pp. 58 ff.

46. *Comentarii,* p. 42 and n. 20; Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," pp. 67–68, 70–71. See also B. Nyberg, *Kind und Erde* (Helsinki, 1931), pp. 185–87; Loorits, *Grundzüge des estnischen Volksglaubens,* p. 136. Progress achieved and recent bibliographies in *Manole et les rites de construction.*

47. M. Winternitz, "Einige Bemerkungen über das Bauopfer bei den

Similar sacrifices are found in the Central American cultures,[48] but also in Oceania and Polynesia,[49] in Indochina,[50] in China,[51] and in Japan.[52] Special mention must be made of the sacrifice at the founding of a village among the Mande people of the Sudan—a complex ritual, fully studied by Frobenius, the symbolism of which is not without resemblances to the symbolism implicit in the foundation of Rome.[53] Obviously, in each instance individual studies must determine to what extent the immolation of victims is documented ritually and to what extent it survives only as legend or superstition.

A large volume would be required for an adequate exposition and discussion of the many forms this type of sacrifice has assumed down the ages and in different cultural contexts. To put it briefly, we will only say that, in the last analysis, all these forms depend upon a common ideology, which could be summarized as follows: to last, a construction (house, technical accomplishment, but also a spiritual undertaking) must be animated, that is, must receive both life and a soul. The "transference" of the soul is possible only

Indern," in *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 17 (1887): [37]–[40]); cf. also M. Haberlandt, "Ueber das Bauopfer," ibid., pp. [42]–[44]; fundamental Buddhist text, *Jātaka*, no. 481 (4: 246); cf. Paul Mus, *Barabudur* 1 (Paris-Hanoï, 1935): 202 ff.; *Comentarii*, p. 43.

48. Ibid., p. 42.

49. Ibid., p. 42 and n. 17; Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," p. 66.

50. Ibid., p. 62, n. 86.

51. W. Eberhard, "Chinesischer Bauzauber. Untersuchungen an chinesischen Volksmärchen," in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 71 (1939): 87–99, especially pp. 98–99. In folklore, W. Eberhard, *Typen chinesischen Volksmärchen*, FFC, No. 120 (Helsinki, 1937), p. 146, and *Folktales of China* (Chicago, 1965), pp. 135–37, 231. On present-day sacrifices cf. J. J. Matignon, *La Chine hermétique* (Paris, 1930), p. 244.

52. Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," p. 62; see also Masao Oka, summarized by Alois Closs, "Das Versenkungsopfer," in *Wiener Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte und Linguistik* 9 (1952): 66–107 and especially p. 89.

53. L. Frobenius, *Kulturgeschichte Afrikas* (Leipzig, 1933), pp. 177–80; Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," pp. 64–65. Cf. also my *Traité d'Histoire des religions*, pp. 321 ff., and Cocchiara, "Il Ponte di Arta," pp. 71 ff.

by means of a sacrifice; in other words, by a violent death. We may even say that the victim continues its existence after death, no longer in its physical body but in the new body—the construction—which it has "animated" by its immolation; we may even speak of an "architectonic body" substituted for a body of flesh.[54] The ritual transference of life by means of a sacrifice is not confined to constructions (temples, cities, bridges, houses) and utilitarian objects:[55] human victims are also immolated to assure the success of an undertaking,[56] or even the historical longevity of a spiritual enterprise.[57]

BLOOD SACRIFICES AND COSMOGONIC MYTHS

The exemplary model for all these forms of sacrifice is very probably a cosmogonic myth, that is, the myth that explains the Cre-

54. Morphologically, this "transference of life" has its place in the well-known series of religious monuments "animated" by relics or by representations of vital organs: eyes, mouth, etc. See Paul Mus, "La Tombe Vivante," in *La Terre et la Vie* 7 (1937): 117–27. An Indian boat is made "alive" by drawing two eyes on it; cf. J. Hornell, "Indian boat designs," in *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1920).

55. According to the *T'ao chouo*, for several years potters "had tried in vain to complete the firing of a great jar decorated with dragons, ordered by the emperor. One of them sacrificed himself and jumped into the aperture in the chimney of the kiln; he died, but the jar was made"; cf. Max Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien tchouan, traduit et annoté* (Peking, 1953), p. 45. For metallurgical sacrifices see my study, "Symbolisme et rituels métallurgiques babyloniens," in *Studien zur analytischen Psychologie C. G. Jung* 2 (Zürich, 1955): 42–46, and especially my book *Forgerons et Alchimistes.*

56. When Xerxes sailed for Greece he had nine boys and nine girls buried alive in order to assure his victory. And Themistocles, in obedience to an oracle, had three young prisoners sacrificed on the eve of the Battle of Salamis (Plutarch, Vita Them. 13).

57. Saint Peter was accused of having sacrificed an infant one year old, *puer anniculus*, to assure Christianity a duration of 365 years. The fact that Saint Augustine felt it necessary to answer such a calumny shows that in the fourth century of our era the pagan world still believed in the efficacy of this magical technique; cf. J. Hubaux, "L'Enfant d'un an," *Collection Latomus* 2: *Hommages à Joseph Bidez et à Franz Cumont* (Brussels, 1949), pp. 143–58.

ation by the killing of a primordial Giant (of the type of Ymir, Puruṣa, P'an-ku): his organs produce the various cosmic regions. This motif was disseminated over an immense area; it occurs with the greatest frequency in eastern Asia.[58] In general, the cosmogonic myth has been shown to be the model for all myths and rites related to a "making," a "work," a "creation." The mythical motif of a "birth" brought about by an immolation is found in countless contexts: it is not only the Cosmos that is born as the result of the immolation of a Primordial Being and from his own substance; the same is true of food plants, human races, or different social classes.[59] Best known of all are the Indonesian and Oceanian myths that relate the voluntary immolation of a Woman or Maiden in order that the different species of food plants may spring from her body.[60]

It is in this mythical horizon that we must seek the spiritual source of our construction rites. If we remember, too, that the traditional societies saw the human dwelling as an *imago mundi*, it becomes still clearer that every work of foundation symbolically reproduced the cosmogony. The cosmic meaning of the dwelling was reinforced by the symbolism of the Center; for, as is beginning to be better seen today, every house—*a fortiori* every palace, temple, city—was believed to be at the "Center of the World."[61] In some recent studies we have shown that the homologation house-Cosmos (in many variants: the tent assimilated to the celestial vault, the central pole to the *axis mundi*, etc.) is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the nomadic hunting and pastoral

58. Cf. Alfred Kuhn, *Berichte über den Weltanfang bei den Indochinesen* (Leipzig, 1935); A. W. Macdonald, "A propos de Prajâpati," in *Journal Asiatique* 240 (1952): 323–38.

59. See the works cited in the preceding note and the references given in my study, "La Mandragore et les mythes de la 'naissance miraculeuse,'" in *Zalmoxis* 3 (Bucharest, 1942), pp. 3–48.

60. See A. E. Jensen, *Hainuwele* (Frankfurt am M., 1939), p. 59; Jensen, *Das religiöse Weltbild einer frühen Kultur* (Stuttgart, 1948), pp. 33 ff. and passim. Cf. also Eliade, *Aspects du mythe* (Paris, 1963), pp. 129 ff.

61. For the symbolism of the "Center of the World" see my works cited in n. 33.

cultures of America, northern and central Asia, and Africa.[62] But the idea of a Center through which the *axis mundi* passes and which, in consequence, makes communication between Sky and Earth possible is also found at a still earlier stage of culture. The Achilpa of Australia always carry a sacred pole with them on their wanderings and decide what direction they shall take by the direction toward which it leans. Their myth relates that the divine being Numbakula, after "cosmicizing" the territory of the future Achilpa, creating their ancestor, and founding their institutions, disappeared in the following way: he made the sacred pole from the trunk of a gum tree, anointed it with blood, and climbed up it into the sky. The sacred pole represents the cosmic axis, and settling in a territory is equivalent to a "cosmicization" from a center of radiation. In other words, despite their being constantly on the move, the Achilpa never leave the "Center of the World": they are always "centered" and in communication with the Sky into which Numbakula vanished.[63]

We can, then, distinguish two conceptions in regard to the religious function of the human dwelling: (1) the earlier, documented among hunting peoples and nomadic pastoralists, consecrates the dwelling and, in general, the inhabited territory by assimilating them to the Cosmos through the symbolism of the "Center of the World"; (2) the other, and more recent, conception (it first appears in the societies of the paleocultivators, the *Urpflanzer*) is characterized, as we have seen, by repetition of the cosmogonic myth: because the world (or food plants, men, etc.) arose from the primordial sacrifice of a Divine Being, every construction demands the immolation of a victim. We should note that, in the spiritual horizon concomitant with this conception, the actual substance of the victim[64] is transformed into the beings or objects that issue from

62. Cf. Eliade, *Le chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase* (Paris: Payot, 1951), pp. 236 ff. (2d ed., 1968, pp. 211 ff.; English translation, pp. 260 ff.); Eliade, "Centre du Monde, Temple, Maison," passim.

63. This mythico-ritual complex has recently been studied by Ernesto de Martino, "Angoscia territoriale e riscatto culturale nel mito Achilpa delle origini," in *Studi e materiali di Storia delle religioni* 23 (1951–52): 51–66.

64. For our purpose it is of no consequence whether there is a voluntary sacrifice (type: Hainuwele) or an immolation (type: Ymir, P'an-ku, etc.).

it after its death by violence. In one myth the mountains are the bones of the Primordial Giant, the clouds his brain, and so on; in another the coconut is the actual flesh of the Maiden Hainuwele. On the plane of construction rites the immolated being, as we have seen, acquires a new body: the building that it has made a "living," hence enduring, thing by its violent death. In all these myths death by violence is creative.

From the viewpoint of cultural history, it is in the conception of the paleocultivators that we must situate the blood rites integral to construction. A. E. Jensen came to a similar conclusion, chiefly on the evidence of the rites that accompany the building of the "men's house" (*dárimo*) among the Kiwai.[65] According to Landtmann, the ceremony is conducted as follows: When it is decided to build a *dárimo,* the village chooses an elderly couple and informs their eldest son of the choice; he rarely refuses: he daubs his face with mud and begins to mourn for his old parents, for it is the common belief that they will not outlive the completion of the building. The old man receives the name "father of the *dárimo,*" and his old wife that of "burning woman." It is they who play the principal part in the building of the cult house. The work comprises the erection of a central pillar, anointing it with the blood of an enemy, and, above all, the sacrifice of a prisoner, for a new cult house is not fit for use before such a sacrifice.[66] The myth that provides the basis and the justification for this ritual relates how the divinity who was immolated *in illo tempore* became the first of the dead: the *dárimo,* the cult house, is the terrestrial reproduction of the beyond. According to Jensen, the Kiwai rite represents the archetype of the *Bauopfer,* and all the other forms of constructional sacrifice found throughout the world are connected with the same exemplary model. We consider it difficult to follow him so far. Rather, we believe that the Kiwai rite represents an already specialized variant of the original scenario, which included only the following moments: immolation of a divine being, followed by a "creation," that is, his metamorphosis into a substance or a form that did not exist before. The Kiwai sequence—especially the immolation of the divinity, his transformation into the realm of the dead, and the reproduction of the latter in the cult house—already presents an amplification of the original schema.

65. Jensen, *Das religiöse Weltbild einer frühen Kultur,* p. 58; Jensen, *Mythos und Kult bei Naturvölkern* (Wiesbaden, 1951), pp. 210 ff.

66. Gunnar Landtman, *The Kiwai Papuans of British New Guinea* (London, 1927), pp. 10 ff., 17 ff.

ARCHAISM AND SURVIVAL

Whatever may be concluded as to the Kiwai version, constructional blood sacrifices very probably belong, as historico-cultural phenomena, to the spiritual world of the paleocultivators. Does this mean that wherever we find such rites we have vestiges transmitted without a break from those distant times? No. Nor does it mean that the presence of the *Bauopfer* in any given culture necessarily implies that the culture belongs entirely to the plane of the paleocultivators. In a number of cases rites or myths have passed from one people to another and from one historical epoch to another without entailing a transmission of the original culture implied by such rites and myths. In our view there is something of greater importance than the chronological precisions that can be arrived at concerning such beliefs; it is the fact that certain cultures or certain peoples have chosen or preserved some particular vision of the world, whereas others have rejected it or very soon forgotten it. We mean that establishing the origins, the age, and the historical vicissitudes of a belief or a cultural complex suffices neither for an understanding of them as spiritual phenomena nor to make their history intelligible. Two other problems, which we consider just as important, immediately arise: (*a*) what is the real meaning of all these beliefs and all these cultural complexes? (*b*) for what reason has some particular people preserved, elaborated, and enriched them? These are difficult questions, to which it is not always possible to give a satisfactory answer, but which must not be forgotten when one undertakes to write even the most elementary page of a history of the spirit.

To return to our Balkano-Danubian ballads: the archaism of their motifs and images stands out still more clearly after all that we have said. The wife who consents to be immolated so that an edifice may rise on her own body indubitably represents the scenario of a primordial myth—primordial in the sense that it reports

a spiritual creation very much earlier than the protohistorical and historical periods of the peoples of southeastern Europe. It is still too early to attempt to determine how and by what means this mythico-ritual scenario managed to survive in southeastern Europe. Yet we are in possession of several facts that can explain the archaism of these creations of Balkano-Danubian folk poetry. They are these: (1) the Balkano-Danubian countries are the only ones in which the constructional sacrifice has given rise to remarkable folk literary creations; (2) the scarcity of similar legends among the Russians, the Poles, and the Ukrainians seems to exclude the hypothesis of a Slavic origin for this literary motif; (3) the Romanians and all the Balkan peoples preserve a common substratum, inherited from the Thracians (and which, furthermore, is the principal unifying element for the entire Balkan Peninsula); (4) other cultural elements common to all the Balkan peoples seem still more ancient than the Geto-Thracian heritage, presenting, as they do, a pre-Indo-European aspect;[67] (5) finally, we must bear in mind that the Thracians and the Cimmerians shared in a protohistorical culture whose successive irradiations crossed central Asia and instigated.the appearance of new cultural aspects on the shores of the China Sea and at Dongson.[68]

We must not let ourselves be led astray by the "contemporaneousness" of folklore: it very often happens that beliefs and customs still alive in certain eminently conservative parts of Europe (among which Romania and the Balkans must always be reckoned) reveal strata of culture more archaic than the one represented, for example, by the "classic" Greek and Roman mythologies. The fact is especially evident in regard to everything to do with the customs and magico-religious behavior of hunters and

67. This is especially true of religious symbolism, dances, and musical instruments. Cf. Dr. Jaap Kunst, "Cultural relations between the Balkans and Indonesia," in *Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen*, Medeling, no. 107 (Amsterdam, 1954).

68. Cf. Robert Heine-Geldern, "Das Tocharerproblem und die Pontische Wanderung," in *Saeculum* 2 (1951): 225–55; Heine-Geldern, "Die asiatische Herkunft der südamerikanischen Metalltechnik," in *Paideuma* 5, nos. 7–8, (April 1954): 347–423, especially pp. 350 ff.

herders. But even among the agriculturalists of contemporary central Europe it has been possible to show to what an extent considerable fragments of prehistoric myths and rituals have been preserved.[69] Systematic research in the field of Romanian and Balkan paleoethnology is still to be undertaken; but it is already established that a certain number of pre-Indo-European cultural elements have been better preserved there than anywhere else in Europe (perhaps with the exception of Ireland and the Pyrenees).

It is not always possible to reconstruct all the phases through which a religious concept passed before it crystallized into folk artistic creations. Then too, as we have already said, it is not here that the chief interest of the investigation lies. It is far more important to arrive at a thorough understanding of the original spiritual universe in which such primordial religious conceptions arose —for they are conceptions that, despite the numerous religious reevaluations they have undergone (of which the last, Christianity, was also the most radical), have nevertheless survived, at least in the form of "superstitions," of folk beliefs imbued with extremely ancient images and symbols. The fidelity of a people to one or another mythical scenario, to one or another exemplary image, tells us far more about its deeper soul than many of its historical accomplishments. It is not without significance for an understanding of the southeastern European peoples that they alone created the masterpieces of their oral literatures on the basis of so archaic a ritual scenario. D. Caracostea thought he could prove that, among all these productions of the folk, the Romanian ballad of Master Manole was artistically the most accomplished. Even if certain Balkanologists and folklorists are not of his opinion, the fact remains—and it is important—that the ballad of the constructional sacrifice is reckoned a masterpiece in no other Balkan literature. Now it is agreed that the high point of Romanian folk poetry is represented by the ballad of Master Manole and by the "Miorita" (see below, chap. 8). It is significant that these two creations of the Romanian poetic genius have as their dramatic motif a "vio-

69. Cf., for example, Leopold Schmidt, *Gestaltheiligkeit im bäuerlichen Arbeitsmythos. Studien zu den Ernteschnittgeräten und ihrer Stellung im europäischen Volksglauben und Volksbrauch* (Vienna, 1952).

lent death" serenely accepted. Whether or not this conception derives directly from the famous Getic "joy in death" could be discussed forever. The fact remains that Romanian poetic folklore never succeeded in surpassing these two masterpieces whose seed is the idea of creative death and of death serenely accepted.

1955.

6

Romanian "Shamanism"?

BANDINUS AND THE *INCANTATORES*

The Hungarian folklorist Györffi Istvan is very probably the first to have called attention to the "shamanistic" nature of the magical practices documented among the Moldavians.[1] He relied chiefly on the data collected by the missionary Bandini (Bandinus) about the middle of the seventeenth century. Since Istvan's article appeared, Bandinus' text has remained the prime source for all discussions of "Moldavian shamanism."[2]

Marcus Bandinus, of the Minorite Friars, was archbishop of Marcianopolis, in Lower Moesia, and of Durostor and Tomis on the Black Sea; he was also administrator of the Catholic Church of Moldavia, in which province he lived from 1644 to 1650. For the information of Pope Innocent X he drew up a rather lengthy report: *The General Visitation of all the Churches of the Catholic Rite in the Province of Moldavia.* He began writing it in March 1648, at Bacău, but the manuscript of the *General Visitation* was not published until 1895, under the editorship of V. A. Urechia.[3]

In his chapter "De incantationibus" Bandinus states that the Moldavian *incantatores* and *incantatrices* are as highly regarded there as the *Doctores subtilissimi et sanctissimi* are in Italy. Everyone is allowed to practice and teach the art of magical incantations and

1. Gyórffy István, "A bübájolás a moldvaiaknál," *Ethnographia* 36 (1925): 169 ff.

2. See, for example, Geza Róheim, "Hungarian Shamanism" (*Psychoanalysis and Social Sciences* 3 [New York, 1951]: pp. 131–69), p. 147.

3. V. A. Urechia, *Codex Bandinus. Memoriu asupra scrierii lui Bandinus dela 1646, urmat de text, însoţit de acte şi documente* (Analele Academiei Române, Memorii, Secţia istorică, series 2, 16 (1893–94): 1–335; Bucharest, 1895). See also A. Veress, *Scrisorile misionarului Bandini din Moldova,* 1644–50 (Academia Română, Memorii, Secţia Istorică 6, Mem. 13 [1926]: 333–99).

spells; moreover, the profession is even considered honorable. "Oh!" he exclaims, "what moans and sighs have I not raised to God! How many times have I had to practice patience. . . ." And Bandinus goes on to explain his emotion by recounting that he has witnessed the abominable doings of the *incantatores*, which are exactly comparable to what the ancients have reported concerning their *vates*. He has seen the *incantatores* change countenance, their hands and feet tremble, then their entire bodies, until they staggered and finally threw themselves on the ground, their hands and feet stretched out, to lie inanimate, like corpses, for an hour, sometimes for three or four.

"Returned to themselves, they present a horrible spectacle to the beholder, for they rise up little by little, trembling in all their limbs; then, as if possessed by infernal Furies, they fall into such contortions that one would believe not the smallest bone in their bodies remains in its socket. Finally, as if waking from sleep, they tell their dreams as oracles. When someone falls ill or loses some possession, he calls on the *incantatores*. When someone finds himself opposed by a friend or acquaintance who is usually well disposed, he tries to overcome it by spells. So too, they believe that spells are the best way to avenge themselves on an enemy. We should need a whole volume to describe the practices of these charmers and spellbinders, diviners and jugglers."

(*Quo in pretio sunt in Italia Doctores subtilissimi simul et sanctissimi, eodem ferè his Incantatores et Incantatrices. Exercere et discere incantationis et maleficiorum artem omnibus liberum et honorificum. O quantos ego animi gemitus et suspiria ad Deum fudi? quantus habui patientiae exercendae occasiones, dum audirem, et non semel viderem abominanda exerceri maleficia. Quod de antiquis Vatibus fabulam narrat antiquitas, his in partibus domestica cognoscit experientia. Dum enim futura praesagire Incantatores volunt, certo sibi sumpto loci spatio, mussitationibus, capitis intorsione, oculorum revolutione, oris obliquitate, frontis ac genarum corrugatione, vultus mutatione, manuum ac pedun agitatione, totiusque corporis trepidatione aliquantisper pedibus sistunt, deinde terrae se allidunt, expansis manibus pedibusque divaricatis, mortuis similiores, spatio unius horae, non numquam trium aut quatuor, quasi exanimes manent. Tandem ad se redeuntes horrendum videntibus faciunt spectaculum, nam in primis tremulis artubus paulatim se erigunt, deinde quasi furiis infernalibus exagitati, sic omnia membra et articulos membrorum exerunt, ut nullum ossiculum in suo articulo ac junctura manere credatur. Postremò velut è somno evigilantes, sua somnia, tanquam oracula pandunt. Si quis in morbum incidat, aut rem aliquam amittat, recursus ad Incantatores. Si quis amici aut benevoli aversum animum experitur, maleficiis aversum animum sibi conciliare nititur. Si quem verò offensum sibi habet, maleficiis se vindicare et ulcisci optimum medium putat. In his autem et similibus omnibus, diversissimi Incantatorum, Maleficorum, Divinatorum, Praestigiatorum actiones, vix uno comprehendi volumine possint.*)[4]

We can only regret that Bandinus did not write the volume he declares would be needed, so valuable is the information he gives, even though, in his account of the Moldavian *incantatores*, he unconsciously uses some literary clichés descriptive of the antique *vates*. The ethnological importance of his testimony lies above all in his account of the *incantatores'* ecstasy, the long period (from one to four hours) during which the "charmers" remain inanimate, *mortuis similiores*. It is clear that the "oracular" value of their dreams was guaranteed by the ecstatic nature of the trance. Very probably some of these dreams described the journeyings of the magician's soul while his body lay "as if dead."

This form of ecstasy may be termed "shamanistic," for it is characteristic of shamanism in the strict sense, both in Siberia and central Asia as well as elsewhere. Generally speaking, in all the regions where shamanism is dominant the shaman brings on his ecstasy either to ascend to the Sky to meet the gods there; or to find the soul of a sick person—which has wandered away or been stolen by demons and held captive in the underworld—and return it to the body; or, finally, to guide the deceased to the world of the dead. Shamanism is further distinguished by a series of specific characteristics, the most important of which are: a vocation that may declare itself by an "initiatory malady"; an initiation that includes the dismembering of the body, the renewal of the organs and viscera, and ritual death followed by resurrection; a ritual costume and a musical instrument typical of shamans (usually the drum); the ability to turn into an animal and in that form to fight

4. Urechia, *Codex Bandinus*, p. 328; cf. also pp. 157–58.

with other magicians; relations with a mythical Tree; and so on.[5]

Now, none of these constituent elements of shamanism is documented among the various kinds of "sorcerers" and "healers" known in the Romanian provinces. Even more importantly, the ecstatic trances Bandinus describes are found nowhere else in Romania. All this leads us to believe that the *incantatores* whom Bandinus encountered in Moldavia were not Romanians but Czangös (a Magyar people of the Moldavian Carpathians). The specialist in Hungarian shamanism, V. Diószegi, had come to the same conclusion.[6] In addition, Diószegi usefully brought out the structural differences between the Hungarian *táltos* and the various types of "sorcerers" familiar to the peoples that border on Hungary, and principally the *solomonar* of the Romanians, the *planetink* of the Poles, and the *grabancias* of the Serbians and Croatians. Only the *táltos*, Diószegi points out, experiences an "initiatory malady"[7] or a "long sleep" (a kind of ritual death) or a "dismemberment" of the shamanic type;[8] only the *táltos* undergoes an initiation, possesses a special costume and a drum, and practices ecstasy.[9] Since these specifically shamanic elements are documented, as we have shown in our book and as Diószegi confirms, among all the Turkic, Finno-Ugrian, and Siberian peoples, he concludes that shamanism constitutes a fundamental magico-religious element of the original Magyar culture. The Hungarians brought shamanism with them from Asia when they entered the territory that they occupy today.[10]

5. See my *Chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase* (Paris, 1951; new edition, corrected and enlarged, 1968; English translation by Willard R. Trask, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* [New York, 1964]).

6. V. Diószegy, *A sámánhit emlékei a magyar népi müveltségben* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1958), pp. 320 ff.; Diószegy, "Die Ueberreste des Schamanismus in der ungarischen Volkskultur" (*Acta Ethnographica* 7 [Budapest, 1958]: 97–135), p. 124.

7. Cf. ibid., pp. 98 ff.

8. Ibid., pp. 103 ff., 106 ff.

9. Ibid., pp. 112 ff., 115 ff., 122 ff.

10. Cf. M. Eliade, "Recent works on Shamanism. A Review Article" (*History of Religions* 1 [1961]: 152–86), pp. 171–72; Eliade, *Shamanism*, p. 224, n. 26. On Hungarian shamanism see also Michel de Ferdinandy, "Die Mythologie der Ungarn" (*Wörterbuch der Mythologie, herausgegeben von H. W. Haussing* 1: *Die Alten Kulturvölker* [Stuttgart, 1964]), pp. 248 ff., 256 ff.

RITES OF DEFENSE AGAINST THE PLAGUE

Bandinus also gives us information about certain rituals of defense against the plague, which he says that he personally observed, in November 1646, in the villages around Lucaşeşti. At every crossroads along the frontier with Transylvania a *priapos*, carved from the trunk of an oak and given the form of a human body, with hands and feet, was set up; in its right hand it held a drawn bow and two arrows, in its left a lance ready to strike. "The [Romanian] nation, ignorant, and brought up in superstition," as Bandinus puts it, believed that this subterfuge would terrify the plague and keep it from entering Moldavia.[11]

In this form the rite is no longer practiced among the Romanians. Their most usual defense against the plague consists essentially in weaving a peasant woman's shirt (*iie*) and displaying it at the edge of the village.[12] Making the shirt is an important element of the rite; it must be woven and displayed in less than twenty-four hours, preferably during the night, by nine or seven widows or unmarried girls. According to Teutsch, in the district of Făgăraş seven women, all named Maria, weave a shirt together, and use it to dress a "doll" about three feet tall and stuffed with straw; then they hang or tie the "doll" to a tree at the edge of the village.[13] Aurel Candrea reports what he personally learned from an informant in Şpring (district of Sibiu): in the morning two women carry "the Plague's shirt" (*iia Ciumei*) out of the village, put a hat on it, and fasten it to a pole. Soon afterward the shirt disappears; Candrea's informant had no doubt that the plague had carried it

11. Urechia, *Codex Bandinus*, p. 56.

12. The Italian traveler Del Chiaro reports that in Wallachia the hemp shirt (which had to be made in twenty-four hours) was later burned; cf. *Istoria delle moderne rivoluzioni della Valachia*, ed. N. Iorga, pp. 45 ff., cited by I. Aurel Candrea, *Folklorul medical român comparat* (Bucharest: Casa Scoalelor, 1944), p. 138.

13. Teutsch, cited by Candrea, ibid., pp. 137–38.

off.[14] In the commune of Răşinari it is believed that the plague, seeing the shirt (*iia*) hanging on a stake at the edge of the village, turns back.[15]

The apotropaic value of "the Plague's shirt" derives both from its being made ritually and from its function as an anthropomorphic scarecrow. But the *priapos* carved from the trunk of an oak, as Bandinus describes it, is no longer documented among the Romanians. On the other hand, a similar ritual is found among the Yeniseians. Anuchin reports that, during epidemics, the Yeniseians set up "shamans' sticks" at crossroads; in addition they mark the graves of the victims with poles from three to four and a half feet high decorated with carvings of human figures.[16] As we shall soon see, this is not the only analogy between the information supplied by Bandinus and Finno-Ugrian and Siberian rituals.

Still in reference to defense against the plague, Bandinus reports what he was told by "men worthy of all trust": once during the night ten girls ran stark naked around the village, jumping, waving their arms, singing, and throwing burning branches. Ten youths, also naked and armed with lances, came to meet them. The two groups greeted each other in silence, and the youths crossed their lances with the burning branches. Bandinus explains that the Romanians believe the plague will not touch the naked men: it will be ashamed and will spare the young. Finally, Bandinus describes another rite: during the night ten youths, followed by ten girls, plow a furrow around the village, singing and laughing. The villagers, armed with clubs, post themselves along the furrow, facing Transylvania, ready to fight against the plague.[17]

Bandinus expressly says that these rites are not Hungarian but are practiced by the "[Romanian] nation." However, the rite is only vaguely documented in Romania. Aurel Candrea gives only

14. Ibid., p. 138.

15. Ibid., p. 139 (from Victor Păcală, *Monografia comunei Răşinari* [Sibiu, 1915], p. 225).

16. V. I. Anuchin, "Ocherk shamanstva u yeniseiskikh ostyakov" (*Sbornik Muzeya Antropologii i Etnografii* 2 (Saint Petersburg, 1914), pp. 66 ff.

17. Urechia, *Codex Bandinus,* pp. 56 ff.

one example (district of Dolj) of circumambulation around the village, but without ritual nudity: when the plague is raging, the villagers look for two black oxen born on a Saturday of the same cow; they are harnessed to a cart and driven around the village.[18] An incantation against the plague, collected in the district of Bihor, speaks of "a black man and a black girl with her hair down," who, with two black oxen and a black plow, plowed "a black furrow," followed by all the villagers singing incantations, to keep the plague from entering the village.[19]

As we see, there is no reference to the ritual nudity that figures so largely in Bandinus' account. On the other hand, a furrow plowed around the village by naked youths or girls is the typical ritual of defense against the plague among the Slavs and the Finno-Ugrians. Aurel Candrea had already cited some examples. In Serbia twelve youths and twelve girls undress at midnight, harness themselves to a plow, and, in complete silence, plow a furrow around the village seven times.[20] Among the Bulgarians a pair of twins plow several furrows with a plowshare forged by twin blacksmiths and drawn by twin oxen.[21] In 1871, when cholera broke out near Moscow, "twelve virgins harnessed themselves to a plow at midnight and plowed a furrow around the village."[22] This custom was quite widely disseminated in Russia, though the ritual nudity of the women and girls was sometimes diminished (they wore a long shirt without a girdle, their hair hanging down, etc.). In this case the ritual was secret and exclusively feminine; if the nocturnal

18. Candrea, *Folklorul medical român comparat,* p. 139, from the journal *Ion Creangă* 3: 311.

19. Ibid., p. 140, from *Sezătoarea* 5: 145.

20. F. S. Krauss, *Slavische Volksforschungen* (Leipzig, 1908), p. 100; Candrea, *Folklorul medical român comparat,* p. 140.

21. *Sbornikŭ za narodni umotvorenija* 28 (Sofia): 557 ff.; Candrea, *Folklorul medical român comparat,* p. 140. On the importance of twins in rituals of defense against the plague see n. 25.

22. W. Mannhardt, *Wald- und Feldkulte* 1 (2. Aufl. I–II, Berlin, 1904–5): 561. Cf. also W. R. S. Ralston, *Songs of the Russian People* (2d ed.; London, 1872), pp. 396 ff. (the ritual furrow plowed around the village during epidemics among cattle).

procession of women met a man, he was likely to be molested and killed and buried on the spot. It was believed that his presence canceled the efficacy of the rite, or that he was a personification of the plague.[23]

In other areas inhabited by Slavs the rite is performed either by women or by women and youths together, but always naked.[24] In some places a pair of twins draw the plow (for example in the environs of Cracow, in Poznania, in Byelorussia, etc.).[25] The ceremony is also practiced among the Wends of Saxony: when the plague is raging, naked men thrice make the circuit of the village in silence by night.[26] Mannhardt had already reported the Mordvinian practice of ritual circumambulation of the village by youths harnessed to a plow and guided by a virgin.[27] The same rite is documented among other Finno-Ugrians.[28] In addition, as the abundant documentation assembled by E. Gasparini shows, the custom of harnessing women and girls to a plow, even when no ritual ceremony is involved, was rather common both among the Slavs and among certain eastern Finno-Ugrian peoples (for example, the Permians).[29]

23. Evel Gasparini, *Ethnologica* 12: *Il Matriarcato Slavo* (university course, 1961–62, mimeographed; Venice: La Goliardica, 1962), p. 137 and the bibliographical references in n. 360. The rite was also feminine among the Mordvinians; cf. U. Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen der Mordwinen*, FFC, no. 142 (Helsinki, 1952), pp. 400–401.

24. Cf. Gasparini, *Il Matriarcato Slavo*, pp. 137–38, and nn. 363–68.

25. Cf. D. Zelenin, *Russische (ostlavische) Volkskunde* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1927), pp. 67 ff.; Gasparini, *Il Matriarcato Slavo*, 137–38.

26. R. Wuttke, *Sächsische Volkskunde* (Dresden, 1900), p. 379; Candrea, *Folklorul medical român comparat*, p. 141.

27. Mannhardt, *Wald- und Feldkulte* 1: 561; cf. also Harva, *Die religiösen Vorstellungen der Mordwinen*, pp. 400 ff.

28. Cf. Gasparini, *Il Matriarcato Slavo*, p. 142.

29. Cf. Evel Gasparini, *Credenze religiose e obblighi nuziali degli antichi Slavi* (university course, lithographed; Venice: La Goliardica, 1960), p. 92, with the bibliography given in n. I; Gasparini, *Il Matriarcato Slavo*, pp. 139 ff., with nn. 369–91.

It is possible that the ritual of defense against the plague, as it was documented among the Slavs and the eastern Finno-Ugrians, was also practiced in the seventeenth century in the section of Moldavia that Bandinus visited. However, it is more likely that, as in the case of the *incantatores*, his data relate not to the Romanians but to the Czangös.

THE "FALL OF THE *RUSALII*"

Some scholars have referred to shamanism in connection with the "fall of the *Rusalii*," a kind of para-ecstatic trance entered into by women of the Timoc region during the three days of Pentecost. The ceremony was observed about 1890 by a Serbian schoolmaster, Riznič, and was described by him in F. Krauss's review *Am Urquell*. In 1938 and 1939 G. A. Küppers observed the "fall of the *Rusalii*" in the same village of Duboka,[30] and he was impressed by the fact that he found in it precisely the ritual ensemble that Riznič had described half a century earlier. The Timoc region had also been visited in 1902 by a Serbian writer, Tihomir Georgevici, and his travel notes, *Kraz Nase Rumane* ("Among Our Romanians"), had been translated and published by C. Constante in 1943.[31] We have been unable to consult Georgevici's monograph, but the passages concerning the "fall of the *Rusalii*" were translated into French (from the Romanian version) by Octavian Buhociu.[32] It is these passages, as supplemented by Küppers' observations, that we shall use.

Tihomir Georgevici, who was not in the district during the week of Pentecost, did not witness the rites, but he declares that he carefully recorded what he was able to learn from people who had

30. G. A. Küppers, "Rosalienfest und Trancetänze in Dubroka. Pfingstbräuche im ostserbischen Bergland" (*Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 79 (1954): 212–224).

31. Tihomir Georgevici, *Printre Românii noştri. Note de călătorie*, trad. din sârbeşte de C. Constante (*Românii din Timoc* 3 [Bucharest: Societatea Română de Statistică, 1943]: 25–147).

32. O. Buhociu, "Le Folklore roumain de Printemps" (principal thesis for doctorate in letters, University of Paris, Faculty of Letters, 1957), pp. 262–64.

witnessed them. "The fall of the *Rusalii*," he writes, "is the name given to the hypnotic sleep into which the women of the village of Duboka fall during the three days that the Feast of Pentecost lasts; they are wakened from it by the song of the 'cockchafer.' On Whitsunday itself, the women begin to swoon about three o'clock in the afternoon, on the second day about noon, on the next day about nine o'clock in the morning, and they remain in that state until nightfall. It is said that the same thing happens to babies and old women.

"Before swooning a woman shivers, lies down on the ground, becomes agitated, and begins to strike herself wherever she can with her hands. At this point the 'cockchafer' arrives. Two men approach her, with three women who are called queens (they are the 'female cockchafers'). The 'king-cockchafers' hold drawn swords and begin to dance: some dance, the 'cockchafers' play their instruments. They dance around the swooning woman, singing:

> "Op, op; op, that way, that way,
> and that way once again.

"During this time—that is, for five minutes—the bagpiper plays. Then the man who is leading the dance grasps the woman under the armpits and carries her across a stream, stopping thrice and thrice singing the same song as at the beginning. While the others dance, the leader takes a little water from the stream, a little wormwood, and a little garlic, he mixes them together in his mouth and spits into the swooning woman's mouth and onto her face. During the dance the leader makes the sign of the cross over her. Then he gives her a little water from the point of a knife, twice, then he washes her and makes her sit down where she first fell. She gets up by herself and begins dancing as if nothing had happened to her."[33]

G. A. Küppers gives a similar description, though he does not mention the "cockchafers": "*Überall, wo die Rosalien vom Geist befallen werden, reden sie in Zungen. Die Menge lauscht andächtig ihre Äusserungen, da der Glaube allgemein ist, dass die Rosalien in die*

33. Georgevici, *Printre Românii noştri*, p. 97, translated by Buhociu, "Le Folklore roumain," pp. 262–63.

Zukunft schauen können. Ihre Äusserungen sind bald ein Schreien, bald Stammeln und Winseln, bald Hauchen. Nach einer Zeit konvulsivischen Ringens befällt sie eine Lähmung, die dann wieder durch Abwehr und Kraftausbrüche unterbrochen ist.

"Nachdem die vom Rosalienschlaf Befallenen niedergebrochen sind, sammelt sich um sie eine Gruppe von Tänzern und Tänzerinnen. In dieser Gruppe ist offenbar der alte Erlöserchor zu sehen. Unter Anführung eines stattlichen Mannes, der in der Hand ein Messer hält und dazu Kräuter mancherlei Art, Wermut, Knoblauch, Kamille, schliesst sich die Gruppe zur Kette. Die Kette beginnt um die Schlafende zu tanzen, nachdem der Anführer mit dem kräutergeschmückten Messer ein Kreuz über die Schlafende zeichnete. Auch setzt der Anführer seinen Fuss auf den Leib der Schlafenden, bzw. er stösst mit seiner Fusspitze an ihre Fussohle. Dreimal bewegt sich der Erweckerchor im Uhrzeigersinn um die Befallene; dann wird die Richtung des Tanzes geändert. Ich konnte die feineren Einzelheiten gerade dieser streng zeremoniellen Tänze nicht genauer beobachten."[34] The author publishes some interesting photographs (figs. 7–13): they show the fall of a "*Rosalie*" (for whom Kuppers also uses the terms "somnambulist" or "sleeper"; cf. figs 8–9, 11); the "*Rosalien*" being carried to a stream and sprinkled with water; a musician helping to wake them by playing the flute; and so on.

Buhociu also quotes a passage from Georgevici reporting similar cases in other Romanian villages in the districts of Timoc and Craina. "In certain places I have heard Romanians tell one another that there were men and women who swooned and went mad on particular days. I remember Anca Martinovici, of Valaconia, who swooned on the eves of great feast days and then—so it is said—predicted illnesses, answering the questions put to her. For this reason many people went to see her, from her own and from neighboring villages, and she answered their questions and gave them advice. Often when something had been stolen, when someone was ill, or some other misfortune had befallen, people went to this woman to ask her advice. M. Subovici mentions a certain Dokia, a woman of forty from the village of Volnia, who from her childhood has become a *Rusalie* at Pentecost and who began to fall into ecstasy on the great feast days from the time that she became a witch. On the occasion of the great feasts the credulous

34. Küppers, "Rosalienfest und Trancetänze," p. 223.

come to her, and she talks with God, the saints, the dead and the living, she predicts the future and prescribes medicines for all kinds of illnesses. They say that she does this without being paid."[35]

None of these examples of trance exhibits any shamanic characteristics. They lack all the constituent elements of shamanism: vocation, initiation, apprenticeship, ritual costumes, tutelary spirits, ability to bring on trance at will and to control it, cures by specific techniques, psychopompic function, and so on. In the case of the *Rusalii* and their "fall" (sleep, "somnambulism"), we have a para-ecstatic experience that is liturgically and culturally conditioned, for it is accessible only during the three days of Pentecost and only to the inhabitants of certain villages (predominantly women) whom a well-established tradition has already prepared for the "trance." The "awakening" by dancing and music is equally unshamanistic.

The "fall of the *Rusalii*" more nearly suggests the phenomenon of "tarantism," brilliantly studied by Ernesto de Martino and his coworkers in the Puglia region.[36] In both cases alike, there is a temporary crisis of consciousness, prepared by a traditional mythico-religious context and overcome by the aid of a choreo-musical cathartic. It should also be noted that in some parts of Romania the Căluşari ("men-horses") use the same cathartic when they are summoned to cure the sick by their dances and songs. These practices lead to an entirely different problem, into which we cannot enter here. In any case, the problem of the "fall of the *Rusalii*" should be restudied from a wider comparative viewpoint.

SHAMANISM AND INCANTATIONS

These pages had already been written when we first came upon Lükö Gábor's article on "incantation formulas of shamanic origin among the Romanians."[37] The famous passage from Bandinus is once again quoted and discussed in it (pp. 115 ff.) to prove the existence of shamanistic practices among the Romanians in the

35. Georgevici, *Printre Românii noştri,* p. 99, translated by Buhociu, "Le Folklore roumain," pp. 263–64.

36. Ernesto de Martino, *La Terra del rimorso. Contributo a una storia religiosa del Sud* (Milan, 1961).

37. Lükö Gábor, "Samanisztikus eredetü ráolvasások a románoknal" in

seventeenth century. According to the author, toward the end of the Middle Ages the Romanians lived in a geographical, political, and even cultural unity with certain peoples of Asiatic origin among whom a number of shamanic beliefs and techniques survived. Except for some Magyar groups east of the Carpathians, the author continues, these originally Asiatic peoples were Romanianized. It follows that Lükö Gábor holds that the data supplied by Bandinus really have to do with Romanians, even if they were descendants of recently Romanianized allogenic ethnic groups. We will not discuss this interpretation, since V. Diószegi has already shown that Bandinus' *incantatores* belonged to the Czangö group of Moldavia.

The greater part of Lükö Gábor's study is devoted to an analysis of the beliefs and techniques implicit in the Romanian incantation formulas.[38] According to him, the characteristic features are the following: (1) illnesses are believed to be brought on by theriomorphic and anthropomorphic demons; (2) on their side, the healer-magicians use theriomorphic and anthropomorphic spirits; (3) they are also assisted in their cures by spirit helpers; (4) the healer-magicians sometimes sacrifice to the demons of the disease. The majority of these motifs, the author concludes, are found in the shamanic rites of the Siberian peoples.

It is possible that a certain number of the "charms" and incantation formulas in use among the Romanians have central Asian and Siberian parallels. But others—to a considerable number—have their counterparts in southern Europe and the Mediterranean region, and their origin is to be sought in the ancient Near East. The archaism of the Romanian incantation formulas, and especially their ultimate dependence on a source that is not "popular" but "learned," make central Asian shamanic influences improbable.

1962.

Ethnographia 72 (1961): 112–34; cf. pp. 133–34, the German summary: "Zaubersprüche schamanistischen Ursprungs bei den Rumänen."

38. His chief authority is, of course, the rich monograph by Artur Gorovei, *Descântecele Românilor* (Bucharest, 1931; Academia Română. Din viaţa poporului român 11).

7

The Cult of the Mandragora in Romania

Of all the plants that are sought out in Romania for their magical or medicinal virtues—whether by professional sorceresses or by ordinary village women and girls—not one equals the mandragora, or mandrake, in the number of "dramatic" elements that enter into the ritual of gathering it.[1] The technique of digging it is stranger and more complex than that of any other herb, even those that are essential in sorcery or folk medicine. Only the mysterious operations performed in digging mandragora clearly preserve very ancient rites. In addition, many of the practices connected with the gathering of other magical or medicinal plants are drawn from the ritual of the mandragora.

The magical virtues of the mandragora go far to explain the singular destiny of the plant. For the root of the mandragora can have a direct influence on the vital forces of man or Nature; it can arrange marriages for girls, bring luck in love and fertility in marriage; it can make cows give more milk; it has a beneficial effect on business affairs, it increases wealth, and, in general, brings prosperity, harmony, and so on. The magical properties of the mandragora can also be turned against another person, for example, against a girl, so that the young men of the village will no longer ask her to dance, or against an enemy, to make him fall ill or even go mad. In addition to its magical properties, the mandragora has medicinal virtues. But for this latter use, too, it is dug according to the same ritual.

1. The variety *Atropa belladonna*, which grows in Romania in shady mountain forests and flowers in June–July, is known to the Romanian peasant by the following names: Wolf Cherrry (*cireaşa lupului*), Lady of the Forest (Transylvania, Braşov), Great Lady, Flower of the Forest (department of Gorj), Herb of the Forest (Transylvania), the Empress, the Empress of Herbs, etc. (cf. Zaharia Pantu, *Plantele cunoscute de poporul român* [2d ed.; Bucharest, 1929], pp. 171–72).

In the commune of Vad (department of Maramureş), the mandragora is brought from a "deaf wood," that is, a wood so far from the village that the crowing cocks are not heard in it. The women and sorceresses who go to look for it (*babele meştere*, "old wisewomen") set out at dawn before the village is awake, taking care that no one shall see them. If a dog becomes aware of their presence, or if they hear barking, the charm is broken and the operation loses its effect; mandragora gathered under such conditions has no power.

The propitious season for gathering mandragora is the period from Easter to Ascension Day. The "old wisewomen" take some food with them when they set out: eggs blessed in the church, a cake made from puff paste, stuffed cabbage, brandy, wine, and so on. A week beforehand the mandragora is "destined"; that is, a mandragora plant is sought out and a red ribbon tied to it, so that it can be more easily found on the morning of the gathering. As soon as they reach the wood the women go straight to it; "they must not search." Then the earth is dug up, the plant is uprooted and laid on the ground. The food that has been brought is set around it. The "wisewomen" eat and drink, "embrace and caress one another." Finally they begin talking about the person for whom the mandragora is intended and about the effect it is to produce—success in business, consideration in the village (for mayors, counselors), more milk from particular cows, and so forth.

When two girls go to gather mandragora they embrace and caress each other, saying:

> "Mandragora, Mandragora,
> Marry me after a month,
> For if you can't marry me
> I'll come back and break you to pieces."
>
> (*Mătrăgună, mătrăgună,*
> *Mărită-mă peste-o lună*
> *Că de nu m'ăi mărita*
> *Oiu veni şi te-oi ciunta.*)

Or else:

"Mandragora, Mandragora,
Marry me after a month,
If not this one, at least the next,
But marry me in any case."

(*Mătrăgună, mătrăgună*
Mărită-mă peste-o lună
De nu 'n asta 'n cealălaltă,
Mărită-mă după olaltă.)

"Amorous" women also have recourse to mandragora to make their husbands love them. Women of less strict morals, the "libertines" (*femeile lumeţe*), in order to arouse love in men take off all their clothes when they dig the mandragora.

In the hole left by the uprooted mandragora a few pieces of sugar and some coins are put, and wine is poured. The mandragora is also washed with wine. When the meal is over and the charm completed, the gatherer puts the mandragora in her bosom and goes home. No one must know that the woman for whom it is intended, or the "old wisewoman," is bringing the mandragora back. So, be it the one or the other, they speak pleasantly to whomever they may meet and greet everyone. "If anyone knows they are bringing back a mandragora, or if, behind them on the path they have taken, there is fighting or quarreling or cursing or throwing stones, or if anyone drops something, the effect of the mandragora is the opposite of what it was gathered for." The same informant from Vad also supplies the following:

"One day the mother of one of the village girls brought back a mandragora. After the women had passed, our maidservant suddenly starts hitting me. She insults me, pulls my hair, tells me to go to the devil, then drives me away by throwing clods of earth at me. I cry, not knowing what she wanted of me. She rushes into the kitchen, knocks around the pots and pans, the tableware, the buckets. From there she runs to the watercloset and begins furiously throwing stones and clods of earth into it, all the while muttering that they were not stones she was throwing into it but such-and-such a girl, such-and-such a woman, so that she should never be loved, should be disdained by the youths and men. Some weeks later the girl whose mother the maidservant had seen as she was coming back with the mandragora was beaten and driven out of the round dance. Her mother complained everywhere, saying that she could not understand why her daughter was disliked by everyone and unattractive to the young men. What she didn't know was that our maidservant had known she was bringing back a mandragora, and so had destroyed the charm."[2]

In Maramureş the girls go to the fields, accompanied by an "old wisewoman"; there, after eating, they dance around the mandragora almost naked, repeating:

"Mandragora, good plant,
Marry me after a month,
For if you can't marry me,
I'll eat what fasting forbids,
For if you don't bring him to me,
I'll eat everything that fasting forbids."

(*Mătrăgună, poamă bună,*
Mărită-mă peste o lună,
Că de nu m'ai mărita
Da de dulce oi mânca;
Că de nu mi l-oi aduce
Da eu oi mânca de dulce.)[3]

In the department of Turda the girls who want to be invited to dances most often, and so get married the soonest, go to a mandragora at midnight with their arms around each other. There they *take off their shoes* and prostrate themselves three times. Each of them has brought a small silver coin, which she holds in her mouth so that it touches both tongue and teeth. Then they lean over the mandragora, *not touching it with their hands,* and cut a few leaves from it with their teeth against the silver coin. They return, again with their arms around each other, still dancing, being careful not to be seen or to be overtaken by the light of dawn. If they

2. Archiva de Folklor a Academiei Române [= A.F.A.R.], ms. 963, ff. 28–32, commune of Vad, department of Maramureş, collected by Grigore Vasile, schoolmaster; informant, Grigore Muntean (age forty, 1937).

3. T. Papahagi, *Graiul şi folklorul Maramureşului* (Bucharest, 1925), p. xliv.

wear a leaf of mandragora, wrapped in a bit of cloth, never touching it with their hands, they will be eagerly sought as partners at dances and will very soon marry.[4]

In the department of Turda too, girls or young women go to the mandragora in pairs at midnight, *naked, with their hair down*, and keeping their arms around each other all the way. Arrived there, they lie down one on top of the other, and each plucks a leaf with her hand. Then they go home, still dancing with their arms around each other, and let the mandragora leaf dry until it can be reduced to powder. After that, they go to the mill and steal flour *with a hand held upside down*, then put it *through a sieve held upside down*. With the flour, the mandragora leaf, and honey they make a dough, which they leave to sour. The dough is then put into brandy or tea or coffee or into a cake, which is served to the young man to arouse his love.[5]

In the commune of Tritenii-de-Sus (department of Turda) the ritual for gathering mandragora is different: "Four girls who want to shine in the village round dance gather mandragora, put charms on it, and bury it in the middle of the street, where they *dance stark naked*. While they are dancing, four youths stay near them to guard them, repeating:

"'Mandragora, good Dame,
Marry me during this month,
If not this month, at least next,
But let me no longer remain a maid.'"

(*Mătrăgună, Doamnă bună,*
Mărită-mă 'n astă lună,
De nu 'n asta, în aialaltâ
Numai să nu mai fiu fată.)

They carry the mandragora to church during Lent, on Holy Thursday, hiding it under their apron or their blouse, so that it

4. A.F.A.R., ms. 407, f. 23, commune of Bistriţa, department of Turda; informant, Ion Mucea (age sixty, 1932), collected by Iuliu Coroiu, schoolmaster.

5. A.F.A.R., ms. 407, ff. 27–28, commune of Bistriţa; informant, Elena Plic (age thirty, 1932); collected by Iuliu Coroiu.

will be blessed; on Saint George's Day they wear it when they go dancing.[6]

The presence of young men and girls together in mandragora rituals is documented only occasionally in Romania. The most usual formula is for two girls or two young women to go gathering it in the company of an older woman or a wisewoman. Elsewhere the pair of young women is replaced by a pair of young men. This is the custom in the department of Bacău. An old wisewoman, accompanied by two girls or two young men, goes to a wood very early, so that at sunrise they are near the mandragora. They take some food and wine with them. "After finding the plant, the wisewoman pronounces magical formulas, while her companions eat, drink, talk to each other amorously, embrace, and cover each other with kisses. When the wisewoman has finished, they dance around the plant, while the old woman carefully digs up the ground so as not to break the smallest bit of the root." This is the procedure when the mandragora is gathered "for love." If it is gathered "for hate," to bring bad luck or to make someone ill, the young people, instead or talking to each other amorously and embracing, quarrel, spit in each other's faces, and even fight.[7]

In the Apuseni Mountains, mandragora is gathered "for love" (*pe dragoste*), "for marriage" (*pe măritat*), "for dancing" (*pe joc*), "for drink" (*pe băutură*), "for hate" (*pe urît*). Two middle-aged women go to look for it, on a Tuesday and fasting, very early in the morning, so that they will meet no one. The plant must be gathered far from the village, so that neither cockcrow nor the mewing of cats is heard. The women do not speak to each other on the way. "They take bread, salt and a small coin. As they look for the mandragora, they silently recite prayers, and when they find it in some well-sheltered place they proceed to gather it. To do so, they must undress and prostrate themselves three times, facing east. They walk around the plant three times, reciting magi-

6. A.F.A.R., ms. 383, ff. 9–10, commune of Tritenii-de-sus, department of Turda; informant, A. Petrovan (age seventy, 1932).

7. A.F.A.R., ms. 852, ff. 49–50, commune Târgu-Ocna-Vâlcele, department of Bacău; informant, Elena Moisă (age seventy-two, 1936), collected by C. Pâslaru, schoolmaster.

cal formulas. They then dig up the mandragora, lift it with the spade, and put it on the ground, to the east of where it grew. In the hole they put the bread, the salt, and the coin, 'the price of the mandragora.' The price must be paid, not only on pain of making the plant powerless, but also of hearing it cry out at night to those who gathered it, demanding that it be put back where it was, and of its vengeance if they do not obey. Finally the two women replace the earth where the mandragora was, and prostrate themselves three times, facing west. After this they sit down back to back, one facing east, the other west. The latter takes the mandragora and hands it to the former. This completes the gathering."[8]

When the gathering is "for love," the two women put their arms around each other, embrace, and exchange passionate words of endearment. As they circle around the plant (no doubt a reminiscence of a ritual dance) the women say:

"Mandragora, good Mother,
I do not take you for madness,
I take you for love;
I do not take you to drive me mad
I take you to make me in love."

(Mătrăgună, Doamnă bună
Nu te iau de bolunzît
Ci te iau pe îndrăgit;
Nu te iau să bolunzăşti
Ci te iau să îndrăgeşti.)[9]

If the mandragora is gathered "for marriage," the magical chant that is sung is almost the same, with some insignificant variants, throughout Romania:

"Mandragora, good Mother,
Marry me during this month,
If not this month, at least next,
Let me not remain without a husband."

8. Valeriu Butura, "Cultul mătrăgunei în Munţii Apuseni" (offprint from *Grădina mea,* 2d year, no. 10–11, October–November 1936), p. 2: data collected in the commune of Sălcina-de-jos, department of Turda.

9. Ibid., p. 3.

(Mătrăgună, Doamnă bună
Mărită-mă 'n astă lună.
De nu 'n asta 'n hailaltă
Să nu fiu nemăritată
Că s'a ros coada de beartă,
Degetele de inele
Şi grumazii de mărgele.)[10]

If it is gathered "for hate," to keep the person for whom it is intended not only from being loved but even from being liked, the women turn their faces away from the mandragora and say, scratching their backs:

"I will take you
But why shall I take you?
To make hateful, not to make pleasing,
And not for being seen.
Who takes you, who drinks you,
Shall see you only from the back,
Never from the front."

(Eu te iau,
Pe ce te iau?
Pe urît, nu pe plăcut
Nici pe văzut.
Cine te-o lua
Sau te-o bea,
Numai cu dosu te-o vedea
Cu faţa ba.)[11]

When it is gathered "*pe joc,*" to make the person for whom it is intended sure to be invited to the village dance, the two women circle the mandragora three times, calling:

"Hop, hop, hop,
To me in the dance,
Mandragora, good Dame."

(Hop, hop, hop,
Cu mine 'n joc,
Mătrăgună Doamnă bună.)[12]

10. Ibid., p. 3.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., p. 2. It is usually required that there be no wind while mandragora is being gathered.

In Moldavia, in the department of Vaslui, the mandragora—which is also called "High Lady" (*Doamnă mare*), "Empress" (*Impărăteasa*)—serves principally "for love." The women and girls who use it must change their clothes, at least their shirts, when they wear it; they must also speak to it with respect, as a sacred plant. It is gathered in April and May, before Pentecost; for the belief is that after that date the plant's magical virtues disappear. The woman who goes to gather mandragora must be neatly dressed and not have had sexual relations. She goes to the wood in silence, taking care that she is not seen, uproots a mandragora, and puts in its place bread or maize gruel, honey or sugar, saying: "I give you honey, bread, and salt, give me Your Holiness's virtue!" If the woman has to cross a stream on the way, she throws a little bread or maize gruel into it so that the water will carry away the fragments, not the magical virtue of the plant.

The rite must be performed on a day when the moon is full. The hairs on the root of the mandragora are then tied together in fives, sevens, or nines, while the name of the person for whom it is intended is spoken. These bunches of root hairs are called *gherbe*. (sheaves?). On a day that is not a fast day the woman puts the first three *gherbe* in a new pot, adding honey, sugar, and wine, and saying: "I give you these delicacies, give So-and-so health and beauty." She then pours "unsullied" water, taken from three springs, on the mixture and recites: "As the water flows from the spring clear and pure, so may So-and-so, when she washes, become shining and called by everyone" (i.e., invited to dance by the young men before all the other girls). Then she fills up the pot with dough, covers it, and boils the contents until nightfall. The person (man or woman) for whom the drink is prepared makes the sign of the Cross once for each of the *gherbe* that have been used and swallows the same number of mouthfuls of the liquid. He then goes to the edge of a stream, rubs his joints with the mixture (the ingredients boiled in the pot), and pours the rest over his head, in such a way that only his head is touched and all the liquid is carried away by the current. When he leaves, he must not look back or the magical virtue of the plant will be dissipated. Sometimes the operation is performed beside a flowering tree, and the herbs from the pot are hung on its branches and left there until they dry up and are destroyed.

Sometimes, too, the root of the mandragora is kept under the hat or sewed into the clothes; this assures the wearer of high regard in the community. When the mandragora is gathered "for hate," the women—as we have seen is the case everywhere in Romania—use precisely the opposite procedure: they go to the plant in dirty clothes, talk coarsely, make grotesque movements with their heads, hands, and eyes, in order to annul the plant's magical virtues. Anyone who tastes a dish or wine containing mandragora root hairs on which such a spell has been put risks madness.[13]

In the department of Hotin (Bessarabia) the mandragora, before being gathered, is "treated" with salt and spirits. It is approached with the greeting, "Good-day, Mandragora!" When it is brought back the plant is boiled (whether the root or the leaves is not stated); then the water is used to wash the face "to bring beauty and consideration."[14]

In the Oaş region mandragora is gathered by very young girls accompanied by an old woman. The favorable day is the Friday of Pentecost (commune of Cărmăzana). The girls take spirits with them, put a small coin at the root of the plant, then begin embracing one another and dancing around it. After digging up the root they lay it on the ground and dance around it again. Finally they fill their glasses with spirits and give a toast:

"Long life if you love me,
If not, perish like Sodom!"

(*Să trăieşti de mă iubeşti,*
De nu, să te sodomieşti!)

Then they eat the puff paste cake that they have brought from the house. And they return with several mandragora roots, to be

13. *Apărătorul Sănătăţii* 2: 202, cited by Arthur Gorovei and M. Lupescu, *Botanica poporului român* Folticeni, 1915), pp. 79–80 (cf. *Şezătoarea* 15, no. 5, August 1914).

14. A.F.A.R., ms. 187, f. 10, commune of Hodorăuţi, department of Hotin; informant, Ileana Bordeianu (age eighty-seven, 1931).

used through the year. When they go to the village dance, they carry a bit of the root wrapped in a handkerchief; in this way they will be sure of being asked to dance.[15]

In Boineşti, another commune in the same region, the girls go in pairs to gather mandragora, carrying spirits, bread, backfat, honey, and unleavened bread blessed on Easter Sunday. They must not touch the plant before they have drunk a glass of spirits to its health and said, "Glory to Jesus Christ" and, "As I honor you by drinking, you will honor me." The plant is then sprinkled with spirits. It is dug up, and the bread, the backfat, and the unleavened bread are put in the place where it grew. Then the girls undress and dance around the spot naked.[16]

At Moişeni the girls always set out with an old wisewoman, until Saint John's Day and Pentecost. To gather mandragora they carry spirits and a cake made from puff paste. "They undress, drink spirits, making toasts, caress and embrace one another, and dance." The girl who wears mandragora is in great demand among the young men for the village dance.[17]

On Good Friday in the commune of Cărmăzana (also in the Oaş region) the girls go with an old woman to the fairy "Garden of the Pitiful" (*grădina Milostivelor*) to gather herbs in the same way that they go to gather mandragora. They drink spirits and dance naked until dawn. Then the herbs are first dipped in holy water and afterward boiled, to the recitation of magical "dancing" formulas. The liquid, when applied to the head, makes the hair grow.[18]

Elsewhere (commune of Racşa), the girl goes with no companion but the old woman, who carries the spirits and the puff paste cake. When they come to the mandragora, they both strip naked and dance. The old woman then recites the familiar invocation:

15. Ion Muşlea, "Cercetări folklorice in Ţara Oaşului" (*Anuarul Arhivei de Folklor* 1 [Cluj, 1932]: 117–223), p. 207.

16. Ibid., pp. 207–8.

17. Ibid., p. 208.

18. Ibid., p. 207; incantation "for the dance," p. 208.

"Mandragora, good Mother,
Marry me after a month," etc.[19]

In Moldavia the mandragora appears again in another folk song:

"Green herb, O mandragora,
Beautiful bird, that is so mad
To sing to me in the evening by moonlight."

(*Frunză verde mătrăgună,*
Pasere ce eşti nebună,
De-mi tot cânţi sara pe lună.)[20]

In Moldavia again, young men at the dance ironically sing the following lines to girls who, not having found husbands, have recourse to the mandragora's magical virtues:

"Mandragora, good plant,
Marry me within this month,
If not this one, at least the next,
So long as I am married.
Mandragora, under my bed
All summer long I have watered you,
And you have not given me a husband
But have left me a maid."

(*Mătrăgună, poamă bună,*
Mă măritä 'n iastă lună;
De nu 'n iasta, în cealaltă,
Doar m'oi mărita odată.
Mătrăgună de sub pat,
Toată vara te-am udat,
Şi tu nu m'ai măritat,
Fată mare m'ai lăsat.)[21]

In the department of Baia the old wisewoman goes to gather mandragora in company with the youth or girl for whom it is

19. Ibid., p. 208.

20. Gorovei and Lupescu, *Botanica poporului român*, p. 81.

21. Ibid.

intended. She takes a spoonful of honey, a glass of wine, a slice of bread, and some sugar. She looks for a mandragora and invokes it as follows: "'Lady Mandragora, with honey I will anoint you, with wine I will sprinkle you, with sugar I will sweeten you, with bread I will feed you' (so saying, rub the bottom of the stem with honey, sprinkle the plant with wine, and put the bread and the sugar by the root). . . .

"'I left my house strong and beautiful, in flourishing health, by the highroad, by the path. I met evil [*potca*] on the way: he shot his arrows into my head, my heart, my eyebrows, my eyes . . . and I fell down more than dead. The Good Virgin heard me crying and complaining. She said to me: "Be still, Ileana, cry no more, for I will come to you myself, with cold water I will wash you, with a towel I will dry your head, your eyelashes, your face, your heart, and very soon it will all be over and your heart will be at peace".'"

After this incantation the wisewoman takes the three mandragora roots that she has found beforehand, rolls them together, and puts them on the head of the person for whom the charm has been performed. He or she must at once give a dance cry, and begin dancing. With the help of the wisewoman, the mandragora roots, still rolled together, are put in the carrying bag; then the two gatherers go back, one of them carrying the roots inside his (her) blouse, taking care that no one calls after them. Before getting home they must not spit or blow their noses or urinate. The gathered mandragora is laid on the table, and the whole house must be kept scrupulously clean. A few hairs from a mandragora in wine or spirits assures the tavern-keeper of many customers. Girls who wear it in their bosoms are often invited to dance and soon marry. A few mandragora leaves worn against the chest wherever you go will make you especially honored. Some people transplant mandragora into their garden, in a very clean place, taking care that it does not become soiled.[22]

In the commune of Săpânţa (department of Marmureş), mandragora can be gathered by a young man and a girl or even by groups of people, the only condition being that they must not be

22. A.F.A.R., ms. 799, ff. 8–10, commune of Moişa-Boroaia, department of Baia; informant, Baba Ciocănoaia (age ninety-one, 1935).

seen. After offering the mandragora gifts, they dance around it stark naked, shouting. They return, again making sure that they are not seen. To dig the plant, the ground around it is spaded up carefully, so that the root will not be broken. This is gathering mandragora "for good." When, on the contrary, it is gathered "for evil," it must be beaten with a stick, dragged over the ground, broken to pieces, and thrown at the person with whom a quarrel, or whose death, is sought; as the pieces of the plant are thrown, his name and the evil that is to befall him are spoken.[23]

In the department of Baia, when mandragora is gathered for medicinal purposes, it is invoked as follows: "Most honored Empress Mandragora. I honor you with bread, with salt, prostrating myself: in return, give me your clothes. Wash me, purify me, free me from all spells [*de dătătură, de făcătură*]. May I remain pure, shining as silver passed through a sieve, like the Mother of the Lord who put me on earth."[24]

In the department of Gorj mandragora is gathered for magical purposes by two old women who "undress, let down their hair, and utter incantations, all the while making the most incongruous movements with their arms and legs and running like madwomen."[25]

In the department of Neamţ (commune of Gârcina), for certain serious illnesses, the patient is given an infusion of mandragora to drink. He goes into delirium, and if he has not come back to him-

23. A.F.A.R., ms. 169, ff. 2–3, collected by Vasile Tămăşanu, schoolmaster (1931). This information is decidedly suspect. The informant's name is not given. It is stated that a young man can go with a girl, or a whole group, to gather mandragora, but there is no mention of the "old wisewoman." The plant is said to be struck with a stick, dragged over the ground, etc.—a detail that reappears nowhere else. The insults, the blows, and the grotesque gestures indispensable to the charm when the gathering is "for evil" are exchanged *within the team of gatherers;* as for the mandragora, it always remains respected and dangerous; no one, as far as we know, dares to touch it except reverently.

24. A.F.A.R., ms. 773, f. 20, commune of Boroaia, department of Baia; informant, Maria Dănilă (1935).

25. Belief in the commune of Dobriţa, department of Gorj, cited by Gorovei and Lupescu, *Botanica poporului român,* p. 78.

self in three days, it means that he will never recover from his illness.[26]

We owe one of the best accounts of gathering mandragora (to cure) to Simeon Mangiuca, a native of the Banat, who gives it in one of the earliest studies of Romanian folk botany.[27] "If you go to the forest for it, you must do so singing, eating, and drinking, in other words, joyfully. When you get there, you sit down beside it, continuing to show your joy and saying nothing to it, until the time comes when you think it must be in a good humor too. Then, after continuing to eat and drink beside it, you greet it ('Good-day' or 'Good evening,' according to the time) and you begin talking to it. You invoke it as an empress, and you tell it on account of what trouble you have come to it. The person sick with fever brings with him one of his new shirts, freshly washed, together with honey in a glass that has never held water,[28] red cotton thread, a small silver coin, and a cake (*colac*). The wisewoman, taking all this with her, leaves for the forest with the patient toward evening, so that they will arrive at the mandragora at twilight, when day is divided from night. When they arrive there, the patient's shirt is spread out under the mandragora and all the things that have been brought are put on it. Then the wisewoman, crossing herself and bowing to the ground before the mandragora, begins the following invocation:[29] 'Good evening, Mandragora, good lady and good mother (or: high Mandragora and powerful lady), who touches the heavens with your head, whose roots go deep underground, and whose dress (the foliage) floats in the wind. You who are the queen of the sky and of storms, you who are the queen of flowers, for all flowers bow down before you and come to praise your greatness. It is you

26. Ibid., p. 78.

27. "De însemnătatea botanicei românești," in the journal *Familia*, 10 (Budapest, 1874): 511 ff. The passage that we translate has often been cited and reprinted; cf. I. A. Candrea, *Iarba Fiarelor* (Bucharest, 1928), pp. 53–54.

28. This probably represents the concept of an "unused vessel." Mangiuca introduces a good many "modern" details into his description of the ritual.

29. This incantation has been remarkably well translated (into French) by Marie Holban, *Incantations* (Paris-Bucharest, 1937), p. 98, n.

whom I invoke and it is you to whom I pray, with my elbows bare, my knees bare, my forehead bowed to the ground' (the wisewoman prostrates herself and kisses the ground), 'may you deign to give me strength and health, in other words, cure the illness of the patient So-and-so,' etc. . . .[30] The old woman then crosses herself and, after bowing to the ground before the mandragora, wishing it good health, and bidding it good night, she retires some ten yards, lights a fire, lies down, and sleeps all night with the patient. At dawn the wisewoman and the patient wake, and the wisewoman, returning to the mandragora, says: 'Good morning, Mandragora, our mother, good lady.' She repeats the invocation of the previous evening, changing some of the words—instead of, 'go, walk, seek, and bring the healing charm,' 'you went, you walked, you sought, and you have brought the charm and have put it in this glass to cure this sick person.' The patient takes a sip of the honey in the glass, while the wisewoman pours all the water over his head; then she anoints him with honey, ties the red cotton thread and the silver coin around his neck, puts the new shirt on him, and goes home with him. Before leaving, however, she thanks the mandragora, wishes it good health, and praises its power."[31]

Mandragora[32] is also gathered to cure specific diseases. In the commune of Doftana (Tg. Ocna) mandragora is used against pains in the legs, the hands, the loins, against fevers, and so forth. But whether for curing or for witchcraft, it is gathered according to the same ritual. The plant is boiled in a new pot. Before the patient drinks, he is tied into his bed, for after tasting the liquid he becomes insanely delirious. His whole body is washed with this mandragora juice and he is given three spoonfuls of it to drink. This is done three times a day for three days in succession. Meanwhile

30. The form of this incantation is too literary not to arouse suspicion. Mangiuca wrote in the period when amateur folklorists unblushingly "lent a hand" to the "folk genius." But it is also possible that Mangiuca learned the incantation in some such form from an informant who had been subjected to literary influences.

31. *Familia* 10: 540–41.

32. We must not forget, however, that in Romania this same name is given to plants belonging to different species.

the patient must not eat raw onion for three days or drink spirits for two weeks or wine for six. He must not touch fresh milk or sweet foods for at least four weeks. During all this time he must be kept very clean.[33]

In Moldavia the mandragora and certain other plants are used as charms against stiffness (*lipitură*); a cough is cured by burning dried mandragora leaves.[34] In other places mandragora leaves are used in a poultice to cure abscesses and against dropsy both in men and animals. They are applied to the forehead of people with fever, and often effect a cure. "The only disadvantage of this medicament is that it makes those who use it slightly delirious, but they soon get over it."[35] Mandragora is also recommended to cure toothache.[36]

In Bessarabia the leaves are still used against boils.[37] But it is very probable that in Bessarabia, as in other Romanian provinces, the medicinal use of mandragora (*Atropa belladona*) is taken over by the white bryony (*Bryonia dioica*), a plant very often used in Bessarabian folk medicine. In the region of the Lower Dniester mandragora is effective against the intestinal worms of cattle. Dried leaves, reduced to powder in a mortar are applied to the sores.[38]

Mandragora is also put under millstones, to draw patrons to the mill.[39] Tavern-keepers use it to attract many customers. "He pays two women who know how to gather it. They take with them from the tavern all kinds of beverages, bread, salt, a small silver coin, and dust (also from the tavern) which has been carried around a

33. *Apărătorul Sănătăţii*, 2d year, p. 201; cited by Gorovei and Lupescu, *Botanica poporului român*, pp. 78–79.

34. Ibid., p. 81.

35. Dr. N. Leon, *Istoria naturală medicală a poporului român* (Bucharest, 1903, Annals of the Romanian Academy, 2d series, 25), p. 50.

36. Ibid.

37. Alexei A. Arvat, "Plantele medicinale şi medicina populară la Nişcani" (*Buletinul Institutului Social Român din Basarabia* 1 [1937], Chişinău, pp. 69–124), p. 87.

38. P. V. Stefănucă, "Cercetări folklorice pe valea Nistrului-de-jos" (*Anuarul Arhivei de Folklor* 4 [Bucharest, 1937]: 31–226), p. 213.

39. Muşlea, "Cercetări folklorice în Tara Oaşului," p. 208.

barrel three times in the opposite direction to the course of the sun. With all this, the women walk around the mandragora, drinking and making the wish that people who enter the tavern will not leave it until their pockets are empty. After it has been gathered in this way it is put under the wine cask or else in the drink itself. It is even believed of certain taverns that customers go there drawn by the mandragora."[40] The same belief is found in Moldavia. Tavern-keepers put the charmed mandragora on the cask of wine or the barrel of spirits; they are finished in two or three days, for "people drink till they lose their minds."[41]

The belief that a person who possesses a mandragora can ask anything of it and quickly grows rich—a widespread belief in central Europe—is also held in Moldavia (department of Vaslui). "Go to it on a Sunday, find it in the fields, give it food and drink—wine and bread—and carry it home, surrounded by musicians and people; if you then pay it the honors that are its due, if you rejoice in its presence, if you do not quarrel and do not swear—beware of forgetting any of these rules, the mandragora would kill you—*then you can send it anywhere, ask it for anything, which it will give you* [our italics]. But beware: let not a Sunday pass without your bringing it musicians and men of the village to dance; and be sure that you are gaiety itself, especially on that day."[42]

The Romanians are acquainted with other plants with magical virtues, which must be gathered like mandragora. In Bessarabia all the medicinal or magical plants gathered before Pentecost must be harvested after the enchantress goes to them, puts a little bread near the stem, and says:

> "I give you bread and salt,
> It is for you to give me strength and health."
>
> (*Eu vă dau pâine şi sare,*
> *Dar voi să-mi daţi sănătate.*)

40. Butură, "Cultul mătrăgunei în Munţii Apuseni," p. 3.

41. *Apărătorul Sănătăţii* 2: 202; cited by Gorovei and Lupescu, *Botanica poporului român*, p. 80.

42. The journal *Ion Creangă*, p. 270, reprinted in Tudor Pamfile, *Duşmani şi prieteni ai omului* (Bucharest, 1916), p. 91.

In some places it is the rule to put on a clean shirt when one goes to gather magical herbs. The plant known in Bessarabia as "herb of Barboi," has "the devil's face," that is, "its root turned into a devil's face." It seems likely that this plant is a variety of mandragora: it is equally effective for stiffness, and the ritual for gathering it is exactly the same. It is searched for on a Tuesday evening; the person who goes must not look back either going or coming; he must wear a clean shirt and not speak a word all the way. Putting a small piece of bread and a bit of linen cloth beside the plant, he utters the following incantation:

"I give you bread and salt,
It is for you to give me strength and health."[43]

Another herb, described as "slender, growing straight up, with leaves like silk," is gathered on the same great feast days, the woman who picks it having changed her underwear and washed her body. She sets bread beside it and says:

"I give you bread and salt,
It is for you to make yourself useful."

This herb is given to girls, to be put in the water in which they bathe, "water drawn from the Dniester before sunrise." Then no one dislikes them.[44] Just like the girls who wear mandragora, they are in favor with everyone, are invited to the dance, and are lucky in love. Indeed, it is a general rule that the woman who goes to gather herbs must have her body clean and wear new clothes; otherwise the plant has no power.[45] Bread and salt are placed beside the plant, to these words:

"I cross myself and bow down,
I give you bread and salt,
So that you will cure me."

43. P. V. Ştefănucă, "Cercetări folklorice in valea Nistrului-de-jos," pp. 210–11 (no. 311).

44. Ibid., p. 210 (no. 309).

45. Arvat, "Plantele medicinale la Nişcani," p. 75.

(*Fac cruce şi bat mătănii*
Şi pui pâine şi sare,
Să-mi dai leac.)[46]

Another plant, the "five-fingered herb" (*Potentilla recta L.*), a sort of panacea, good for all diseases, must be boiled in a new pot after being put in front of the icon and receiving three prostrations, with the words: "We offer you bread and salt, be propitious to us."[47]

In Bessarabia again (village of Nişcani) hart's-tongue (*Nephroditum filix mas*)[48] is gathered after being offered bread and salt and three prostrations. The invocation is as follows: "As people quarrel over bread, so may the girls quarrel over me."[49] Another informant (a woman sixty years old) gives the following instructions: "Go to the hart's-tongue, cross yourself, put down the bread, the salt, and the sugar, and make nine prostrations: 'For love you have grown, for love I uproot you. O Hart's-tongue, glorious Emperor, as you have had power to grow and multiply more than all herbs, as you have had power to multiply more than all flowers, so may everyone come running to him who has bought you' (or else say his name). Then put it in wax, wear it, put it in the water when you wash."[50] So too in Ţara Oaşului there are plants other than the mandragora that are gathered after putting eggs, unleavened bread, wine, and so on at their roots.[51]

Let us try to distinguish the characteristic features of this ritual scenario:

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid., p. 76.

48. The identification is by Arvat, ibid., p. 110. Panţu, *Plantele cunoscute de poporul român*, p. 192, sees in the hart's-tongue (*năvalnic*) the *Scolopendrium vulgare*, and adds that girls wear the plant in their bosoms, for "it has the power to make suitors come running (*năvăleasca*)." Cf. also Gorovei and Lupescu, *Botanica poporului român*, p. 92.

49. Arvat, "Plantele medicinale la Nişcani," p. 91.

50. Ibid., p. 91.

51. Muşlea, "Cercetări folklorice în Tara Oaşului," pp. 206–7.

(1) The Romanians have no knowledge of the legend that the mandragora springs from the semen of a hanged man (northern and Germanic Europe); nor do they know the rite of gathering it with the help of a black dog (Europe-Orient).

(2) The mandragora is preeminently the erotic plant. It brings love, marriage, and fertility. It also has magical virtues: if it is gathered for that purpose, it brings wealth. Source of love (fertility) and wealth, it is also a medicinal plant, bringing health.

(3) Gathering the mandragora is a ritual. Obligatory conditions are: sexual purity, cleanliness, silence, and so forth. The plant must be gathered without anyone's knowledge; hence distance is necessary (forests where neither the cock[52] nor the barking of dogs can be heard), comparative solitude (meeting no one on the way), secrecy (no one must know of the intention). Women and girls dance naked around the mandragora, but sometimes they only let down their hair (vestiges of magical nudity). Couples caress and embrace each other. To gather mandragora leaves, girls lie one on top of the other, mimicking the sexual act.

(4) The gathering is surrounded by a whole series of magical acts and precautions. The plant must be gathered at the full moon. The leaves must not be touched with the hands but only with the teeth. The flour from which the magical dough is made with the mandragora leaves must be stolen from the mill, with the hand held upside down.

(5) The plant must be paid, otherwise it produces no effect. Gifts are made to it in exchange for its root: salt, bread, sugar, wine, and so on. The mandragora is personified: "Great Lady," "Empress," "Good Mother."

(6) The mandragora is very dangerous. If it is not gathered in accordance with the rules, if enough respect is not paid to it, its magical virtues operate against the person who has gathered it. The mandragora has a twofold power. Its strange virtues can be directed either toward good or evil, can be summoned for love and health, or for hate or madness.

52. On the use of the formula "the cock is no longer heard crowing" in Romanian incantations cf. V. Bogrea, "O străveche formulă de exorcism în descântecele românești" in *Dacoromania* 4 (Cluj, 1926): 886–91.

(7) Whether it is gathered for good or for evil, the mandragora is feared and respected as a miraculous plant, far stronger than any other. It harbors extraordinary powers, which can multiply life or strike dead. In some measure, then, the mandragora is "the herb of life and death."[53]

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53. It was already believed to possess such powers in antiquity; cf. A. Delatte, *Herbarius. Recherches sur le cérémonial usité chez les Anciens pour la cueillette des simples et des plantes magiques* (2d ed.; Liège-Paris, 1938), pp. 68 ff., 75, 79 ff., 147 ff., 151 ff. I have examined the Oriental beliefs in my study, "La Mandragore et les mythes de la 'naissance miraculeuse'" (*Zalmoxis* 3 [1940–42]: 3–48).

8

The Clairvoyant Lamb

"A THING HOLY AND TOUCHING . . ."

When, in 1850, the poet Vasile Alecsandri published (in the journal *Bucovina* 3, no. 11, pp. 51–52) the folk ballad to which he gave the title "Mioritza," the "little lamb" or, more precisely, the "ewe-lamb,"[1] he was convinced of its poetic value and of its importance for national propaganda, since it brilliantly illustrated the creative genius of the Romanian people. But neither Alecsandri nor any of his contemporaries could possibly foresee the exceptional destiny that awaited the "Mioritza" in modern Romanian culture. From the beginning the poem fascinated not only the Romanians.

1. The text had been sent to him by A. Russo in 1846, during his exile. It was not until after Russo's death in 1859 that Vasile Alecsandri stated that he had himself heard and recorded the ballad on Mount Ceahlău; cf. Adrian Fochi, *Miorița: Tipologie, circulație, geneză, texte,* cu un studiu introductiv de Pavel Apostol (Bucharest, 1964), pp. 124 ff. Alecsandri altered the text he had published in 1850 in the two editions of his collection of folk poems (*Balade* [Iași, 1852], pp. 1–6; *Poesii populare ale Românilor* [Bucharest, 1866], pp. 1–3); see the analysis of these textual changes and the history of the long controversy they inspired in Fochi, *Miorița,* pp. 207–11. Cf. also Gheorghe Vrabie's Introduction to Vasile Alecsandri, *Poezii populare ale Românilor* (Bucharest, 1965) 1: 5–85, 2: 13–15; and Lorenzo Renzi, *Canti narrativi tradizionali romeni* (Florence, 1969), pp. 97–127 ("Un gioiello romantico populare: La Miorița pubblicata de Alecsandri"). As for the original oral version, it is certain that Alecsandri had recorded it with the freedom that his period allowed him. Indeed, he admitted as much himself in answer to a question put to him by Jean Cratiunesco regarding his method of collecting and publishing folk texts: "For some of these poems I have done what a jeweler does for precious stones. I have respected the subject, the style, the form, and even some false rhymes, which are part of their character. Far, that is, from having arranged them in accordance with modern taste, I have preserved them like gold jewels I had come upon covered with rust and crushed. I have removed the stains and restored their original luster. I can take credit only for that. The treasure belongs to the folk, which alone is capable of producing wonders of such originality" (Jean Cratiunesco, *Le peuple roumain d'après ses chants nationaux. Essai de littérature et de morale* [Paris, 1874], pp. 327–28; cf. Fochi, *Miorița,* p. 208, n. 2.

Michelet considered it "a holy thing, touching to the point of heartbreak." Yet the subject of it is simple enough: the lamb warns its young shepherd that his companions, jealous of his flocks and his dogs, have decided to kill him. But instead of defending himself, the shepherd-boy addresses the lamb and tells it his last wishes. He asks it to say that he is to be buried in his own fold, so that he will be near to his sheep and can hear his dogs. He also asks it to put three shepherd's pipes at the head of his grave. When the wind blows it will play on them, and his sheep will gather around and weep tears of blood. But above all he asks it to say nothing of his murder; it must say that he has married, and that at the wedding a shooting star fell, that the moon and the sun held his wedding crown, that the great mountains were his priests and the beech trees his witnesses. But if it sees an old mother in tears, looking for a "proud shepherd," it must tell her only that he has married "the peerless queen, the bride of the world, in a beautiful country, a corner of paradise"; but it must not tell of the falling star or the sun and moon holding his crown or the great mountains or the beech trees.

The "Mioritza" has been translated several times, the first time into French by Jules Michelet in 1854.[2] Like most masterpieces, it is practically untranslatable: so many archaic and paradisal images lose their mysterious freshness, the wealth of their poetry, when they are transposed into another language. This *caveat,* which applies to all attempts to translate folk poetry, is, unfortunately, particularly true of the available English verse translations. We have therefore preferred to present the "Mioritza" in English in an unpretentious prose version.

"Down flowery peaks, thresholds of paradise, heavenly gardens, come three flocks of sheep with three shepherds—one a Moldavian, the other two Wallachians. The Wallachians, the foreigners, are talking together; good God! they are plotting to kill the Moldavian at nightfall, for he is braver than they, he has more fine horned sheep, splendid horses, keen dogs.

"For three days now his favorite lamb has been in misery, bleating sadly, refusing the grass.

"'O my curly lamb, my ringleted lamb, for three days now you

2. Jules Michelet, *Légendes démocratiques du Nord* (Paris, 1854), pp. 351–54.

have been sadly bleating. Has the grass lost its savor, or are you ill, my dear little lamb?'

"'O my dear master, take us to feed in the woods; there is grass there for us and shade for you. Master, master, keep a dog with you, the strongest of all our dogs, for if you do not, those two will set on you and murder you at nightfall.'

"'O loving lamb, if you have the seeing eye, if I die tonight in this flowery valley, tell them, dear lamb, to put me in the ground in my own sheepfold, close to all my possessions, so that I can hear my dogs, and be close to you, my flock. Then, when all is done, put at my head a pipe made of hornbeam—sweetly it sounds!—a pipe made of holly—sadly it sounds!—a pipe made of oak—wildly it sounds! When the wind blows it will play music on them; then my sheep, gathered mournfully together, will weep tears of blood one after the other. But say no word to them of murder! Tell them that in good truth I married a peerless queen, the bride of the world; that at my wedding a shooting star fell; that the sun and the moon held the crown for me; that the great mountains were my priests, the beeches my witnesses, all to the singing of a thousand birds, and the stars my torches!

"'But if, my dear, you see an old mother, running and weeping through these flowery fields, pale with distress, ever asking: "Which of you has seen, which of you has known, a proud shepherd, slim as a young prince? His mustaches are spikes of rye, his hair crow's wings, his eyes the color of mulberries!"—then, my dear little lamb, tell her that in good truth I married a peerless queen, the bride of the world, in a beautiful country, a corner of paradise. But, my dear lamb, never tell her that at my wedding a shooting star fell; that the sun and the moon held the crown for me; that the great mountains were my priests, the beeches my witnesses, all to the singing of a thousand birds, and the stars my torches.'"[3]

Though the "Mioritza" inspired Michelet with a "profound feeling" of the "charming fraternity between man and the whole of

3. To illustrate its meter and rhyme scheme, we give the last lines of the ballad in the original text: *Că la nunta mea / A căzut o stea, / C-am avut nuntaşi / Brazi şi paltinaşi, / Preoţi, munţii mari, / Paseri, lăutari, / Păsărele mii /Şi stele făclii!*

creation," he criticized its expression of "too easy a resignation." "Unfortunately," he added, "this is the national characteristic." Man, in the person of the shepherd-boy, "does not oppose death; he does not bid it begone: he welcomes it, he willingly marries 'the queen, the bride of the world,' and consummates the marriage without protesting. Born of Nature yesterday, he seems to find it sweet to return to her womb today."[4]

A number of Romanian writers have also seen a national characteristic in this serene resignation in the presence of death, in this nostalgia for reabsorption into the cosmos. As we shall discover, this interpretation is unfounded. But it played a part in making the "Mioritza" the central document in an argument that has gone on for nearly a century and that far exceeds the scope of professional controversy in the fields of folklore, literature, or history. In fact, for Romanian culture the ballad represents both a problem in folklore and in the history of folk spirituality on the one hand, and a central chapter in the history of ideas on the other. For this reason we must briefly summarize the most important stages of its exegesis.[5]

HISTORIANS, FOLKLORISTS, PHILOSOPHERS

In general, the "Mioritza" has been studied from three essentially different points of view: (1) the first may be termed historical, since its aim has been to reconstruct the origin and history of the ballad; (2) there has also been the approach of the folklorists who have worked in the field, constantly increasing the number of variants and analyzing the ballad in the general context of Romanian folk culture; (3) lastly there is the exegesis by certain poets and philosophers who saw in the "Mioritza" the supreme expres-

4. Michelet, *Légendes démocratiques du Nord*, p. 342.

5. For the texts we use the variants published by Fochi, *Miorița*, pp. 555–1074, as well as certain more accessible folklore collections, and first of all A. I. Amzulescu, *Balade populare românesti* 2 (Bucharest, 1964): 463–86; cf. ibid., 1:178 ff. See also the Introduction, 1:5–100, and, also by Amzulescu, "Cântecul nostru bătrânesc," *Revista de Folclor* (5 [1960]: 25–58). Cf. Petru Iroaie, "Miorizza o il canto della fusione con la Natura" (Estratto da *Folklore* 12 [Naples, 1958]: 34–42, texts and Italian translation; pp. 43–47, bibliography.

sion of the national genius and hence regarded it as the most perfect illustration of the mode of being characteristic of the Romanian people.

It would serve no purpose to linger over certain fanciful interpretations—for example that of T. D. Sperantia, who saw in the "Mioritza" "a myth or ritual legend" "of Egyptian origin," belonging to the "cult of the Cabiri"; or that of the literary critic H. Sanielevici, who deciphered the ritual murder of Zalmoxis in it.[6] N. Iorga thought that the ballad is the work of a single author, who based it on an actual incident in the seasonal shifting of flocks between valley and mountain pastures in southern Moldavia. The illustrious historian dated the poem from the eighteenth century.[7] Ovid Densuşianu also believed that transhumance explained the "origin" of the "Mioritza": he found the historical nucleus of the poem in economic rivalry among shepherds. According to the eminent philologist, the ballad was created three or four centuries ago in the Vrancea region. Densuşianu can at least be credited with analyzing the "Mioritza" against the entire background of Romanian folk poetry; he showed, for example, that both the episode of the clairvoyant ewe-lamb and the allegory of death are found in a number of pastoral poems. As for the deeper meaning of our ballad, Densuşianu saw it as love of Nature, a sentiment that he regarded as structurally pagan and earlier than Christianity.[8]

But it is especially the literary historian and critic D. Caracostea who devoted many years to studying the "Mioritza."[9] Caracostea

6. T. D. Sperantia, *Mioriţa şi căluşarii, urme de la Daci* (Bucharest, 1934), pp. 10 ff.; H. Sanielevici, "Mioriţa sau patimile unui Zalmoxis," *Adevărul literar* (1931), nos. 552, 553; cf. Fochi, *Mioriţa*, pp. 143–44, 149–50.

7. N. Iorga, *Balada populară română. Originea şi ciclurile ei* (Vălenii de Munte, 1910). See the critical analysis of Iorga's theory in A. Amzulescu, "Observaţii critice în problema studierii baladei" (*Revista de folclor* 4 [1959]: 175–94).

8. O. Densuşianu, *Viaţa păstorească în poezia noastră populară* (Bucharest, 1922; our references are to the 3d edition, 1966), pp. 359–416. Cf. the critique in Fochi, *Mioriţa*, pp. 156 ff.

9. D. Caracostea's publications on the Romanian folk ballad, and particularly on the "Mioritza," are listed in Fochi's bibliography, *Mioriţa*, p. 1077. See especially Caracostea, *Mioriţa în Moldova, Muntenia şi Oltenia. Obiecţiile d-lui Densuşianu. Totalizări* (Bucharest, 1924); "Mioriţa la Armâni" in *Omagiu lui Ion Bianu* (Bucharest, 1927), pp. 91–108; "Mioriţa în Timoc" in *Revista Fundaţiilor Regale* 8 (1941): 141–44; "Sentimentul creaţiei şi mistica morţii" in ibid., pp. 608–20. Caracostea's contributions, well summarized by Fochi, pp. 159–64, were recently brought together in his posthumous work, *Poezia populară română* 1 (Bucharest, 1969): 5–309. See also Ovidiu Bîrlea, *Metoda de cercetare a folclorului* (Bucharest, 1969), pp. 137–41.

denies the historicity of the Romanian ballad in general, pointing out, for example, that where the names of voivodes, boyars, or soldiers appear, analysis shows that the motifs involved are very old, far earlier than the historical figures to whom they have been transferred.[10] What underlies the epic conflicts in folk ballads is not a historical event but "primitive human experience," which produced a "poetic vision of the world."[11] The central motif of the "Mioritza" has nothing to do with transhumance: it expresses a far more general and deeper feeling of pastoral life, especially the shepherd's love of his occupation "and a classic sentiment of optimistic affirmation."[12] As we see, Caracostea criticized both Densuşianu's hypothesis and the "pessimistic" interpretations of the allegory of death, which had been more or less in vogue from the time of Alecsandri.

As for the contributions made by the folklorists, they have been fundamental. Suffice it to say that the appendix to Densuşianu's book on pastoral life contains forty-one texts that had already appeared in earlier publications, whereas in 1930 Ion Diaconu printed ninety-one unpublished texts, all collected in the single region of Vrancea. Constantin Brailoiu and his coworkers down to the beginning of the second World War, and the Institutul de Folclor (Folklore Institute), from 1945 on, considerably increased the number of variants. Adrian Fochi's enormous work presents 930 documents, among them 702 complete versions, 123 frag-

10. Cf. Caracostea, *Balada poporană română* (university course, 1932–33), p. 543, cited by Fochi, *Mioriţa*, p. 160.

11. Ibid., p. 338, cited by Fochi, p. 160.

12. Ibid., p. 777, cited by Fochi, p. 162.

ments, and 105 items of "data on circulation."[13] We do not intend to enter into the problems raised by this mass of documentation in the field of folk poetry. And the more so since Fochi has treated the "Mioritza" in great detail from the point of view of the technique of folk poetry and the problems it raises.

We must, however, comment on the fact that, among the folklorists who have done work in the field, Ion Diaconu, C. Brailoiu, and A. Fochi have not hesitated to advance hypotheses concerning the origin of our ballad, and even theoretical considerations on the structure of the Romanian folk mentality. We shall later discuss the contributions by Brailoiu and Fochi. The case of Diaconu is more ambivalent. On the one hand, his ethnographic investigations and the documents in the field of folklore that he has laboriously collected and published[14] have assured him a place in the foremost rank of researchers. (A pupil of Ovid Densuşianu, he puts the genesis of the "Mioritza" in the Vrancea region, but admits that neither the primitive form of the ballad nor its date of origin can be determined).[15] On the other hand, Diaconu has insisted on the disastrous consequences of "economic changes" and "modern education" on the creativity of the folk. He has spoken of the "scourge of modern technology," which will end by destroying the folk song, "a product totally independent of the influence of modern culture." He has gone even further, maintaining that the folk creator, the "unique, superior individual [. . .] must remain illiterate [. . .], must remain in a genuine primitiveness," so that his work can tend "toward the primitivization of his whole experience in his particular social setting."[16]

To be sure, similar reflections are found in the work of many authors who have studied the consequences of modern industrialization on folk creativity, and an Ananda Coomaraswamy never ceased to praise "illiteracy." But such an attitude, already adversely criticized before the second World War, has been interpreted by the representatives of the official Marxist ideology as a proof of reactionary obscurantism. As for the "Mioritza," Diaconu sees in the ballad "a remnant of pagan poetry, with genuinely naturistic elements, presenting the union of the pastoral soul with the immensity of the cosmos," a poetic stratum earlier than the adaptation of the Daco-Romanian soul to Christian values, for in the "Mioritza" the poet-shepherd seeks "liberation from terrestrial existence not in religion but in Nature."[17]

Ion Diaconu is but one example—and not the most representative—of the almost religious admiration with which many Romanian intellectuals approach the "Mioritic" phenomenon (to use Blaga's coinage; see below, p. 234). In point of fact the ballad has never ceased to inspire writers and plastic artists from the day it became well known. There is no counting the number of poems, plays, novels, and figurative works that, from different points of view and for different ends, have rehandled, in whole or in part, the themes contained in the ballad. Such an affection for this masterpiece of folk poetry is not without significance, and we shall return to it.

"TRADITIONALISTS" AND "MODERNISTS"

As could easily be foreseen, this almost universal tendency to isolate the "Mioritza" from the mass of Romanian folk poetry, to situate it, all by itself, in a mythical horizon, as the preeminent and exemplary creation of the Romanian genius has not failed to annoy a certain number of intellectuals, who refused to see the dramas, the destiny, and the ideal of a modern people in an ancient folk creation. But it is especially certain philosophical interpretations of the ballad that have aroused their wrath. By and large, we could say that they rejected: (*a*) the pessimistic interpretation of the "Mioritza," almost generally accepted from the time of Alecsandri; (*b*) the claim that the ballad is the one and only valid expression of the Romanian folk genius; (*c*) the decision to use the

13. Fochi, *Miorița,* p. 196. Fochi's analysis is based primarily on eight hundred documents, 64 percent of which represent unpublished material (22 percent collected by the author; cf. p. 173).

14. See the list of his publications in ibid., p. 1079; cf. ibid., pp. 147–49, for discussion of his theories.

15. Ion Diaconu, *Aspecte etnografice putnene* (Focşani, 1936), p. 28, cited by Fochi, *Miorița,* p. 148.

16. See these quotations, with others, in Fochi, *Miorița,* p. 148.

17. Diaconu, *Aspecte etnografice putnene,* pp. 23, 15, 28, cited by Fochi, *Miorița,* p. 149.

themes of the "Mioritza" as the point of departure for a "specifically Romanian" philosophical meditation.

The opposition between these two positions (which, in the years we are recalling—1930–1940—only partially represented the dichotomy "modernism-traditionalism") became clearly manifested after the publication of some studies by the poet and essayist Dan Botta and by the philosopher-poet Lucian Blaga. In a famous essay, *Unduire şi moarte* (which can be very approximately translated as "undulation and death"), Dan Botta speaks of "death as a threshold of jubilation," of the shepherd's soul which "palpitates, liberated, in the white spheres of joy. Somewhere, in a space reduced to its essence, the marriage between the shepherd and death is consummated." As in all his works, Dan Botta exalts "nuptial death," which he relates to the "nostalgia for death" in the "Thracian" sense of the term; for the poet had no doubt of the ethnic Thracianism of the Romanians, and Orpheus, Zalmoxis, and the shepherd of the "Mioritza" existed side by side in his universe of values.[18]

For his part, Liviu Rusu, studying "the sense of existence" in Romanian folk poetry, emphasizes the passivity and resignation that he believes to characterize the Romanian people. In the "Mioritza" the hero puts up not the slightest resistance; he does not rebel against destiny, and his only consolation is that death will enable him to rest in the bosom of Nature.[19]

But it is Lucian Blaga who carried the philosophical exegesis of the ballad furthest. The great poet and philosopher devoted a whole book, entitled *Spaţiul mioritic* ("Mioritic Space"), to what he called the "stylistic matrix" of Romanian culture. We shall not attempt to summarize it, for *Spaţiul mioritic* is only one volume of the trilogy in which Blaga expounded his "Philosophy of Culture."

18. See the essays collected in the volume *Limite* (Bucharest, 1936); cf. the new edition in *Scrieri* 4 (Bucharest, 1968), especially pp. 75 ff. After citing all these passages, Fochi criticizes the author for his "profoundly erroneous idea, which derives from the agonic philosophy of despair and nothingness, existentialism" (*Miorita*, p. 152). Nothing is further from Dan Botta's ideas than "existentialism."

19. Liviu Rusu, *Le sens de l'existence dans la poésie populaire roumaine* (Paris, 1935), p. 84. Cf. other citations in Fochi, *Miorita*, pp. 152–53.

Suffice it to say that, for Lucian Blaga, the "Mioritic space" represents the particular horizon in which the Romanian people was formed and still lives ("undulating space," that is, made up of alternating valleys and hills). And since our author revives and elaborates Frobenius' concept of the relationship between landscapes and cultural styles, the "Mioritic space" at once engenders and limits the characteristic creations of the Romanian genius. Lucian Blaga also analyzes the ahistorical and fatalistic attitude of the Romanians, and discovers in the "Mioritza" a transfiguration of death that he finds exemplified in other ethnic creations—which enables him to posit "love of death" as one of the characteristics of Romanian folk spirituality.[20]

Since 1945 Lucian Blaga has been frequently reproached for his "obscurantist mysticism," his error (serious, because ideological) in seeing in Romanian folklore, and especially in the "Mioritza," pessimism, resignation, and passivity—in contrast to which there has been an exaltation of the vitality of the Romanian people, its love of life and ardor for toil. But Lucian Blaga's speculations did not fail to find critics even at the time his *Spaţiul mioritic* was published. In an article entitled "Philosophizing on the Philosophy of the Romanian People," the sociologist H. H. Stahl reproached him with a lack of ethnographic information and rejected his interpretation of the sense of death among the Romanians.[21] Stahl maintained that the "Mioritza," far from expressing a "love of death," corresponds part for part with a funeral ceremony for young men who die unmarried.

The consequences of this correspondence between the ballad and the universe of funerary beliefs and practices are weighty, and we shall consider this problem when we examine Constantin Brailoiu's contribution. But it must be stated at this point that neither Dan Botta nor Lucian Blaga claimed the competence or assumed the scientific responsibility of the ethnographer and the folklorist. They nevertheless considered that their approach was legitimate in that it enabled them to find those deeper meanings

20. L. Blaga, *Spaţiul mioritic* (Bucharest, 1936), pp. 120 ff.

21. H. A. Stahl, "Filosofarea despre filosofia poporului român" in *Sociologie românească* 3 nos. 3–4 (1938): 104–119; cf. ibid., pp. 10–18.

in the ballad that can be apprehended only from the viewpoint afforded by a certain level of speculation. (This is more or less the position that Nietzsche adopted in opposition to Willamowitz and, more recently, Walter Otto against Nilsson, in the interpretation of the Greek religious genius.) It is possible to criticize and even reject Blaga's and Dan Botta's conclusions *in toto,* but it is not possible to reject their method on the pretext that they read new meanings and introduce personal values into an archaic spiritual universe. For as we shall see, the "Mioritza" is itself the result of a similar creative process that, at a certain period, accomplished the transformation of a particular example of primitive ritual behavior into a masterpiece of poetry, laden with new meanings and transmitting a richer and "higher" message.

CONSTANTIN BRAILOIU'S EXEGESIS

The opposition between these two tendencies is admirably brought out in Constantin Brailoiu's brief study, *Sur une ballade roumaine* ("On a Romanian Ballad").[22] In less than three thousand words, the eminent ethnomusicologist and folklorist has concentrated all the arguments possible against the exaggerated exaltation of the "Mioritza." He even disapproves of too intensive a study of the ballad. Referring to Caracostea's investigations—but without naming him—Brailoiu writes: "We have even been treated to the spectacle of learned professors devoting themselves exclusively to studying this poem and founding, as the Germans would call it, an actual 'Mioritza-Forschung,' a 'Mioritzology' with all the trappings. In another direction, a thinker with a considerable following has not hesitated to coin, by employing a common suffix, the oddest of vocables and to imagine a 'Mioritic space,' which is, as it were, the chosen refuge of the soul of the race" (*Sur une ballade roumaine,* p. 3). He passes in review the stereotypes current since the times of Alecsandri—resignation in the face of death, nostalgia for a return to the bosom of Mother Nature—and adds: "Examined with less lyricism, the text presents us with two themes, which it mingles

22. Constantin Brailoiu, *Sur une ballade roumaine: La Mioritza* (Geneva, 1946). On Brailoiu's method see Bîrlea, *Metoda de cercetare a folclorului,* pp. 31 ff.

together but which in themselves are distinct and dissociable" (ibid., p. 4). The two themes are among the most familiar in folklore: the first, *death assimilated to a marriage,* is archaic and has its roots in prehistory;[23] the second theme is what Brailoiu calls "the substitution of some fortuitous element or object for the normal accessories of peasant ceremonies," but it may be more accurately defined as the replacement of elements of peasant funerary ceremonies by cosmic objects or elements.

This second theme, be it noted, also occurs both in folk poems produced in response to particular events and in lyric poetry properly speaking. Its vitality (that is, its "creativity") was still unquenched after the first World War. Brailoiu quotes a text that was probably collected about 1920.

"Tell me, light-infantry soldier,
Where was it written that you should fall?"
"In the valley of the Oituz,
Under fire from the guns."
"Who held the candle for you?"
(for in that part of the country someone
holds a candle in the dying man's hand)
"The sun, when it was high,"
"And who bathed you?"
(for the corpse is bathed)
"The rain when it rained."
"And who censed you?"
(for graves are censed)
"The fog, when it came down."
"And who said the mass for you?"
"The moon, when it rose."

Brailoiu adds: "Except for the military details, we have here, revived and word for word, the ancient complaint over the shepherd's solitary death; we feel the 'Mioritza' close by" (ibid., pp. 5–6). But though this example should have been enough to illuminate the meaning of the national "adherence" to the Mioritic universe, Brailoiu comes to an entirely different conclusion. For him,

23. As early as 1925 Ion Muşlea had compared the "Mioritza" to the funeral rituals for young men and girls; cf. Jean Muşlea, *La mort-mariage—une particularité du folklore balkanique* (= *Mélanges de l'École Roumaine en France* [Paris, 1925]), p. 19.

"comparison of the documents shows that the apotheosis that is so greatly admired [in the "Mioritza"] is not a unique miracle of art but, on the contrary, a lyric commonplace, which a sort of fatal contamination has obviously appended to the body of a narrative whose tragic and pastoral subject implied, as it were, such a peroration" (p. 6).

To understand the ballad, Brailoiu holds, it must be analyzed in the light of peasant rites and symbols. Great specialist in *de-ale mortului* that he was, Brailoiu concentrated into a few brief formulas the inseparable relation between the "Mioritza" and Romanian funerary beliefs and rituals. The posthumous marriages of young men who have died unmarried, like the various rites, including gifts and alms (*pomeni*), performed during and after the burial, have as their purpose the pacification of the soul and help it to surmount the terrible ordeals it encounters on its journey to the "land without pity."[24] Many funerary ceremonies, Brailoiu goes on, must be performed to prevent dead men from "becoming malicious" and returning among the living as ghosts. Hence, our author concludes, the nuptial symbolism of the "Mioritza" is of a piece with the rite of posthumous marriages, and this rite expresses the determination of the living to defend themselves against the dead man by pacifying him. The lines that later produced the inimitable "atmosphere" of the ballad were once upon a time the verbal elements of a charm. "The little note of regret and commiseration that can be detected here and there in these deconsecrated incantations certainly did not creep into them until the day when Christian piety drove out ancestral terror. They express neither the will to renounce nor the intoxication of the void nor the adoration of death, but their exact opposite, since they perpetuate the memory of the original gestures in defence of life" (p. 13).

Brailoiu and H. H. Stahl deserve unstinted praise for having

24. A whole volume should be written one day on the rich and dramatic Romanian mythology of death, which abounds in archaic motifs (for example, "the two paths," the customs houses and customs officers, the animals that lie in wait for the deceased, the sea that must be crossed, the gigantic fir tree that finally bends over and lets the pilgrim pass, "the dew at his feet, the fog at his loins"; cf. Brailoiu, *Sur une ballade roumaine*, p. 11).

elucidated certain constituent elements of the "Mioritza," or, more precisely, of the "prehistory" of the ballad. It remains to be determined if a poetic creation can be reduced to its "prehistory," that is, in the case of the "Mioritza," to the behavior patterns, rituals, and beliefs that preceded it in time and furnished some of its poetic content. However this may be, Brailiou's short essay *Sur une ballade roumaine* marks a historic date in the exegesis of folk poems; in addition, it is a precious document for the history of ideas in modern Romania. Since 1950 a number of folklorists, sociologists, and philosophers have rejected the "pessimistic" interpretation of the ballad, in conformity with Brailoiu's antimystical and antimetaphysical orientation.[25] For his part, Adrian Fochi has revived and elaborated the eminent ethnomusicologist's thesis with an abundance of documentation. The only foreign scholar who has attempted to elucidate the formation of the "Mioritza" and to analyze its poetic value, unfortunately without knowing Stahl's and Brailoiu's contributions, has been Leo Spitzer.[26] But as was to be foreseen, the eminent author of *Stilstudien* concentrated on the process of literary creation, insofar as it can be reconstructed from the point of view of comparative folk literature.

THE PRESTIGE OF THE BALLAD

To return to the variants published and analyzed by Fochi, it is important to emphasize certain facts. First, *the present dissemination of the ballad:* no piece of folk poetry enjoys such wide popularity (Fochi, *Miorița*, p. 409). In the form of a ballad or of a *colind*,[27]

25. Cf. inter alia, C. I. Gulian, *Sensul vieții în folclorul românesc* (Bucharest, 1957), pp. 224 and passim; Pavel Apostol, in his introductory study, *Miorița*, pp. 18 ff., 44 ff., 57 ff.

26. Leo Spitzer, "L'archétype de la ballade Miorița et sa valeur poétique" in *Cahiers Sextil Puşcariu* 2 (1952): 95–120; reprinted in his *Romanische Literarstudien, 1936–1956* (Tübingen, 1959), pp. 835–67. Now see Renzi, *Canti narrativi tradizionali romeni*, pp. 97–127.

27. Ritual Christmas hymn. Cf. Bîrlea, "Miorița colindă," in *Revista de etnografie şi folclor* 13 (1967): 339–47: critical comments on Fochi's method. On the *colinde* in general now see Mircea Popescu, *Saggi di poesia popolare romena* (Rome, 1966), pp. 83–116 ("Le *colinde* romene").

the "Mioritza" is found in every Romanian province, including Bessarabia,[28] but it also circulates in Yugoslavia and in Macedonia.[29] Even so, its area of dissemination was wider in the past. In our day, the region of its greatest frequency is the Danubian plain. In the Vrancea region it was so popular that Ion Diaconu asserted, "it is only in the churches that the 'Mioritza' is not sung." In Oltenia too, the ballad was formerly more widely disseminated (Fochi, ibid., pp. 424 ff.).

Second, the "Mioritza" is one of the few ballads that has *a melody of its own:* the informants declare that they have known the melody for a long time (*din bătrâni*). Despite its pastoral character, the ballad also circulates in agricultural districts (for example, in the Baragan); on the other hand, it is sparingly documented in certain regions in which the pastoral economy is dominant (for example, among the *mărgineni* of Sibiu). In the Vrancea region many shepherds do not know it, whereas it is well known in the villages.[30] Another proof of its vitality is *its capacity for adaptation to geographic and regional realities:* the names of characters, rivers, mountains, etc. reflect the areas in which the variants are recorded (ibid., pp. 413 ff.). Finally, it is important to note that the language of the texts is not archaic but represents the spoken language of the various regions in which variants have been recorded (ibid., p. 420).

All this, in our view, proves that:

(1) the "Mioritza" enjoys an exceptional situation, which may be considered unique in the spiritual experience of the Romanian people (which is as much as to say that the impatience with which

28. See Fochi, *Miorița,* pp. 175–88, the list of places where the variants were recorded; cf. also G. Vrabie, *Balada populară română* (Bucharest, 1966), pp. 217–93.

29. Fochi, *Miorița,* p. 191. Among the 800 variants published by Fochi (in other words, disregarding the documents printed in the appendix, pp. 991–1074), 413 were collected in Transylvania, 178 in Moldavia, 77 in Wallachia, 60 in Oltenia, 15 in the Banat, 13 in the Dobrudja, and 25 have no indication of place; cf. p. 192.

30. Ibid., p. 428. But elsewhere in the same district the "Mioritza" is said to be the favorite ballad among the shepherds; cf. p. 429.

certain authors have responded to the "unique prestige of the ballad" has not been justified);

(2) the "Mioritza" is a genuine folk creation and does not owe its reputation to the literary perfection of Alecsandri's variant;

(3) its ability to reflect various geographic areas and different social realities, together with the fact that it is recited or sung in the language of the present, confirms its general Romanian character on the one hand and, on the other, emphasizes the continuity of what may be called the "creative process," which we shall examine farther on.

In short, if the "Mioritza" is found in every region inhabited by Romanians, if no piece of folk poetry has enjoyed such popularity (and we know that it circulated even more intensively in a more or less distant past), if new variants are constantly being recorded, a preliminary conclusion is inescapable: we are in the presence of a still living creation of the folk, which touches the folk soul like no other; in other words, there is a total and spontaneous "adherence" of the Romanian people to the poetic beauties and the symbolism of the ballad, with all their ritual or speculative implications. So we may conclude that the choice of certain modern authors when they raised the "Mioritza" to the rank of archetype of Romanian folk spirituality was not entirely arbitrary. In insisting on the uniqueness of the "Mioritza," they did no more than follow the choice of an entire people. Only the adjective "Mioritic" is a scholarly invention: the Mioritic world was already sensed by the people as a separate and incomparable universe.[31] In the last analysis we may say that it was justifiable to see in the ballad an exemplary expression of the Romanian soul. But the real problem begins with the exegesis of this unique expression.

ANALYSIS OF THE THEMES

Beginning with Carcostea's and Densuşianu's studies, scholars have applied themselves to distinguishing the various themes of

31. To be sure, the whole body of folklore creations must be taken into account in any general exegesis of the ethnic genius. But the fact remains —as is also proved by Fochi's monograph—that the "Mioritza" has been given a place apart from the other folklore creations by its astounding acceptance by the people.

the ballad, in order to identify its central nucleus and to reconstruct its development. The most recent analysis of the text (by Fochi in his *Miorița*) distinguishes the following themes: In a natural setting proper to the pastoral profession (theme 1, which Fochi calls "the place of the drama"), a series of acts characteristic of that occupation (theme 2: "transhumance") is performed by three shepherds of different regional origins, each with his flock of sheep (theme 3: "the shepherds"). Two of them conspire against the third (theme 4: "the shepherds' plot"), for economic reasons (theme 5: "the causes of the murder"), but a sheep discovers the plot (theme 6: "the clairvoyant ewe-lamb"). Amazed by its strange behavior, the shepherd asks it what ails it (theme 7: "the shepherd's question") and the sheep, after disclosing the plot to him, advises him to be on his guard (theme 8: "revelation of the murder"). The shepherd reacts in a manner both unexpected and unnatural (theme 9: "the shepherd's reaction"); he asks the sheep to show the murderers the place where he wants to be buried (theme 10: "the place of burial") and also asks it to put a certain number of objects on his grave (theme 11: "the funeral objects"), so that the sheep of his flock can mourn (theme 12: "the lament of the sheep"). He further asks it to tell the sheep that he has married (theme 13: "the allegory of death") in a spectacular setting (theme 14: "apotheosis of the shepherd"). But if the clairvoyant lamb sees his old mother (theme 15: "the old mother") seeking for him in accordance with certain signs (theme 16: "the shepherd's portrait"), it is to tell her of his marriage (theme 17: "the Mioritic nuptials"), but not to inform her of the extraordinary setting in which it was celebrated (theme 18: "the nuptial setting").[32]

Fochi next analyzes the 120 Moldavian variants in order to discover the frequency of each of these eighteen themes. We will not reproduce the detailed results of his statistical analysis. Suffice it to say that the themes that occur most often are "the shepherd's question" (no. 7: 96 percent), "revelation of the murder" (no. 8: 97 percent), "the place of burial" (no. 10: 92 percent), "the funeral objects" (no. 11: 82 percent), and "the lament of the sheep" (no. 12: 70 percent). Of equal importance, though occurring less often, are the themes: "the old mother" (no. 15: 70 percent), "the shepherd's

32. Ibid., pp. 211–12.

portrait" (no. 16: 60 percent), "the Mioritic nuptials" (no. 17: 50 percent), and "the nuptial setting" (no. 18: 42 percent).[33]

As for the variants collected in Wallachia, the statistical analysis shows a greater homogeneity in the frequency of the themes: only three (nos. 5, 6, and 16) are found in less than 50 percent of the variants. But, as in Moldavia, the greatest frequency is attained by the central thematic group, that is, the episode of the clairvoyant lamb, the shepherd's last wishes, and the episode of the old mother. Almost the same thematic frequencies are found in Oltenia (Fochi, *Miorița*, pp. 215–16).

In Transylvania, on the contrary, the situation is different, and it is one of Fochi's most outstanding contributions that he published the considerable number of Transylvanian variants (326 documents) and used them in his comparative analyses. In Transylvania the "Mioritza" is also found in the form of a ballad, but it is as a *colind* that it is generally known. Obviously, once it was definitively adopted into the regional repertoire of *colinde*, the "Mioritza" adapted itself to the particular conditions of that oral literary genre. In its simplest form the "Mioritza"-*colind* can be summarized as follows: Two or more shepherds are together with their flocks; they send one of them to fetch sheep, and during his absence his companions decide to kill him. When he returns, they announce his fate to him, leaving it to him to choose the manner of his death (sword, lance, etc.). The shepherd tells them where he wants to be buried and asks them to put certain objects on his grave. In most of the variants the *colind* ends with the lament of the sheep.[34] Some variants also include the episode of the old mother.[35]

33. Ibid., pp. 212 ff. Themes nos. 13–14 occur only in Alecsandri's version, and must be considered additions by the poet. Hence, following Caracostea, Fochi eliminates them from his discussion; ibid., p. 214.

34. Ibid., pp. 379–80. The reasons for the murder are not always clear. In some cases there is something in the nature of a judicial sentence: the shepherd is to be punished because he has not respected certain obligations of his trade, or for reasons of sentiment: it is he, not one of the others, who was chosen by a beautiful girl; ibid., p. 263.

35. Ibid., pp. 381 ff. We may add that in certain versions the shepherd is surprised at the sheepfold by robbers, who tell him that they will kill him as soon as he has made his will; ibid., p. 388.

As we see, the characteristic of the "Mioritza"-*colind* is that the shepherd communicates his last wishes directly to his murderers. The analysis of the frequency of each theme shows that the schema is reduced to two thematic nuclei: the initial epic setting (nos. 1, 3, 4), and the shepherd's last wishes (nos. 10, 11, 12).[36] We must add that the *colind* is sung in chorus by a group at Christmas, but also at *şezători* ("watches") and on other occasions of work in common. If it was sung only at Christmas, the *colind*-"Mioritza" could not have been known by the whole village, including the women, who are not admitted into the groups of *colindători.* Incidentally, this also explains the fact that in some cases the *colind*-"Mioritza" has become a lullaby. The fact that the *colind* is always sung by a group explains its textual stability. Possibilities for improvisation and poetic creation are severely limited. But as we shall see, it is precisely this textual stability of the *colind* that enables us to discern one of the most archaic stages of Romanian spirituality in it.

Summing up the results of his statistical analyses, Fochi arrives at the following picture:

(*a*) only one thematic nucleus is common to the four Romanian provinces (Moldavia, Wallachia, Transylvania, Oltenia), namely, the episode of *the shepherd's last wishes,* made up of the themes: "the place of burial," "the funeral objects," and "the lament of the sheep."[37] No other episode holds a similar place. Hence "the 'Mioritza' is defined by the obligatory presence of this episode" (p. 220);

(*b*) the episode of *the clairvoyant sheep* is characteristic only of the zone of the ballad (that is, Moldavia, Wallachia, Oltenia, the Dobrudja, and a small section of Transylvania). The presence of this episode is typologically important, since it basically separates the *colind* version from the ballad version;

(*c*) the *initial epic setting* (that is, the themes: "place of the drama," "the shepherds," "the shepherds' plot," "the causes of the murder") is confined to Transylvania;

36. Ibid., pp. 217–18. See ibid., the analysis of the (less numerous) variants from the Banat and the Dobrudja.

37. The frequency of this episode is 86 percent in the Transylvanian variants, 78 percent in Oltenia, 74 percent in Wallachia, and 81 percent in Moldavia—which gives a general average of nearly 80 percent.

(*d*) the episode of *the old mother* is characteristic of the ballad zone.

(*e*) If the themes are grouped in four different episodes—namely, (I) *the initial epic setting;* (II) *the clairvoyant sheep;* (III) *the shepherd's last wishes;* (IV) *the old mother*—we see that in Wallachia the ballad formula tends to include all four episodes; in Moldavia the ballad formula includes chiefly episode I, III, and IV, and in Oltenia episodes I, II, and III, whereas the *colind* formula, in Transylvania, contains episodes I and III; (*f*) from the geographical point of view, *the shepherd's last wishes* (III) is present in Transylvania, Oltenia, Wallachia, and Moldavia; *the initial epic setting* (I) appears in Transylvania, Oltenia, and Wallachia; the episode of *the clairvoyant sheep* (II) is documented in Oltenia, Wallachia, and Moldavia; and the episode of *the old mother* (IV) appears in Wallachia and Moldavia.[38]

To be sure, statistics are not decisive in the case of spiritual creations, whether they are the work of the folk genius or of men of letters, for in any statistical analysis as much weight is given to versions that are mediocre or repetitious or mutilated as to versions of great poetic beauty or great symbolic transparency. But the results of statistical comparisons and analyses have their use, since they indicate the general orientation of the creative process and illuminate the changes imposed by regional circumstances and the differences between folk genres.

The fact that the initial epic nucleus—*the shepherd's last wishes*—is also found in Macedonia proves that the fundamental motif was known to the Romanians before their dialectical separation.[39] As we have just seen, *the shepherd's last wishes* is characteristic of the Transylvanian *colind.* Now the *colinde* are extremely archaic

38. Ibid., pp. 220–23.

39. Cf. the text published by Pericle Papahagi in G. Tocilescu, *Materiale folkloristice* 2 (Bucharest, 1900): 938, and the variant published by D. Caracostea, "Miorița la Armâni," in *Omagiu lui Ion Bianu* (Bucharest, 1927), pp. 91–108; cf. Fochi, *Miorița,* pp. 465–66. See also Tache Papahagi, *Paralele folklorice greco-române* (Bucharest, 1944), pp. 7–8, and *Poezia lirică populară* (Bucharest, 1967), pp. 383–84. But Fochi considers that the episode of *the shepherd's last wishes* is earlier than the formation of the "Mioritza," which, in his view, is based on a real incident, later than the dialectical separation of the Romanians; cf. Fochi, *Miorița,* p. 544.

ritual songs. Béla Bártok has already emphasized the archaism and stability of Romanian folk melodies. As for the Transylvanian *colinde,* Bártok points out that they are different from the Christmas carols of western Europe, adding that "the most interesting part of the texts—perhaps one third—has nothing to do with the Christian Christmas."[40] Probably certain texts go back to the pre-Christian period. The presence of the initial epic nucleus of the "Mioritza" among the ritual songs not only confirms its archaism but also indicates that its origins are to be found in a religious universe.

POSTEXISTENCE, POSTHUMOUS BETROTHALS, "MIORITIC NUPTIALS"

The meaning of the Transylvanian *colind* is sufficiently clear: when he learns that his fate is sealed, the shepherd asks his murderers to bury him near the sheepfold, that is, not in the village graveyard but in his familiar setting; in addition he asks them to put a certain number of objects (flute, pipe, horn, bugle, ax, lance, etc.) on his grave. In other words, the shepherd hopes to enjoy a postexistence resembling the life he has lived, for all these objects—both musical instruments and implements and weapons specifically associated with the pastoral mode of existence—indicate a symbolic (i.e., ritual) prolongation of his activity. The underlying concept is archaic and is found in many cultures at the ethnographic stage: a life violently broken off continues in another mode of existence. In our example we even detect the obscure idea that the shepherd's postexistence in certain characteristic objects is assured precisely by his violent death. For the sum total of vital energy that is left available by the interruption of an existence still far from reaching its natural end is "creative," in the sense that it is capable of animating any object made by man.[41] The shepherd's "existence" is continued by the symbolic prolongation of his "professional activity." The flute, the pipe, the bugle will continue to sound, and, hearing those familiar

40. Cited by T. Alexandru, *Béla Bártok despre folclorul românesc* (Bucharest, 1958), p. 39; cf. Apostol, *Miorița*, p. 60.

41. See above, chap. 5 ("Master Manole and the Monastery of Argeş").

melodies, the sheep will remember him and repeat their lament, or go to seek him in the mountains and valleys,[42] or even bid him rise from his grave and resume his work.[43]

The potential richness of these two themes (the burial and the objects placed on the grave), which, be it said, are common to the *colind* and the ballad versions, now becomes strikingly apparent. The shepherd's asking not to be buried in the graveyard but near the sheepfold permits the subsequent amplification of the cosmic landscape and its final transmutation into a magical betrothal scene. On the other hand, the theme of the objects that the shepherd wants to have placed on his grave is capable of many developments, as is proved by the most successful variants of the ballad. As we have just seen, these objects connected with the pastoral profession assure the shepherd, in the Transylvanian *colind,* that he will enjoy a ritual postexistence. But we understand how the idea of a postexistence made certain by the presence of a number of characteristic and familiar objects could lead to a cognate idea (because part of the funerary universe), namely, the supersession of the ritual objects indispensable to a burial, which Brailoiu considered, together with death-as-marriage, essential for an understanding of the "Mioritza."

So we can distinguish two stages in the function performed by such objects in the epic nucleus of the "Mioritza": the first, and more archaic, testifies to the shepherd's desire to prolong a symbolic postexistence far from the village, through the implements characteristic of his occupation; the second stage indicates a more concretely ritual reinterpretation of those objects, a reinterpretation necessitated by the general custom of substituting cosmic objects for the realities of folk funeral ceremonies.

Just as the implements that the shepherd wants to see on his grave end by symbolizing the real objects of the funeral rite, the lament of the sheep comes to replace the ritual lamentations.[44] But the lament of the sheep always represents a "cosmic" ceremonial,

42. Cf. for example, variants 23, 30, 31, 32, etc.

43. Cf. variant 22.

44. See some examples in Fochi, *Miorița*, pp. 277 ff.

not a factitious ritual, a degenerate imitation of the usual lamentations. The vocabulary never reflects the customs accepted by the Church. It is always the wind that will moan, the flutes that will sound, the sheep that will lament.[45] What is so striking in the rich morphology of the "Mioritza" is the cosmic structure of all the expressions that depend upon a ritual substratum. Not only the graveyard, but the village and its church are absent. The mourning of the sheep can be interpreted as a substitute for the usual lamentations only because comparative study has illuminated the "prehistory" of the ballad.

Fochi observes (ibid., p. 276) that the Transylvanian documents are closer to the ethnographic data, whereas the Moldo-Wallachian ballad versions are closer to art. But we must add that it is the mythology of death and the funerary ritual that made the later development of the ballad possible. The primitive idea of postexistence, which we have just analyzed, was able to find expression in more and more complex forms. The desire, the hope, that an existence prematurely and violently interrupted could be lived out, even though only symbolically, explains the importance that the theme of death-as-marriage assumes in the ballad. No life is complete without marriage, and we need only refer the reader to the numerous published works on the nuptial symbolism of the rituals and customs connected with the funerals of young men and girls, in Europe and in other parts of the world.

In Romania the ritual of posthumous betrothals is very widely disseminated. Two zones can be distinguished: in the first, which includes Moldavia, Wallachia, and a considerable region in northern Transylvania, we find the custom of performing a symbolic marriage between a young man who has died a bachelor and a living woman; in the second zone, which includes the rest of Transylvania, the Banat, and a trans-Carpathian prolongation in Oltenia, the partner in the posthumous marriage is the *fir tree* or the *lance*. When these posthumous betrothals are performed, the songs that are sung are characterized by the nuptial symbolism of

45. See the analysis of the vocabulary in ibid., pp. 278 ff.

death. Similar songs are also documented among other peoples,[46] though their area of dissemination is markedly smaller than the custom of posthumous funerals. In Romania some of these songs —for example, "The Fir Tree" and "The Dawn" ("Zorile")—are archaic in character and certainly pre-Christian.[47]

It is to this repertory of images and symbols bound up with the ritual of posthumous nuptials that the folk poet looked for his inspiration. But the passage from the world revealed by these songs to the world of the "Mioritic nuptials" represents a new creation, even more significant than the passage from the posthumous nuptials to the ritual songs that accompany them. If in the *colind* version of the "Mioritza" the objects that the shepherd wants to have placed on his grave constitute a simulacrum of a funeral ceremony, in the Moldo-Wallachian ballad death is totally transfigured.[48] There is no longer any "substitution" of objects and ceremonies, such as Brailoiu posited, and even the vocabulary and the nuptial symbolism of the funerary songs for young bachelors are transcended. For the "Mioritic nuptials" are performed in a cosmic setting of such majesty that the fact of death loses its immediate meaning, which it still retained in the funerary laments, and reveals a dimension never before suspected.

Fochi observes that the theme of the nuptial setting, as a reflection of nuptial ceremonies complementing the funeral ritual, belongs exclusively to Romanian folklore (p. 529). "The 'Mioritza' affords a typical example of the power of transfiguration with which the folk is endowed" (p. 528). Yet the same author, like Brailoiu before him, concludes that the image of the "Mioritic nuptials" can have only the same meaning as the ceremonial on

46. For example, in Corsica, in Hungary, among the Russians, the Galicians, the Bulgarians, the European Turks, the modern Greeks; cf. some bibliographical references in ibid., p. 514, nn. 1–8.

47. There are also songs of clerical origin that show the Church's efforts to abolish these vestiges of the ancient pagan ceremonial; cf. ibid., p. 515.

48. We add that the area of Europe in which ballads attesting to the nuptial sense of death circulate is even more restricted than the area of the ritual songs; cf. ibid., p. 520.

which it is dependent, namely, "defense against the maleficent power of death" (p. 529). And he adds: "The shepherd in the 'Mioritza' does not desire death because he conceives it to be identical with marriage; his only desire is that the funeral ceremony appropriate to his particular situation as a bachelor shall be performed."

It is not difficult to understand why Fochi, like Brailoiu and many others before him, was especially concerned with the danger of interpreting the "Mioritic nuptials" in a "pessimistic" sense—that is, of seeing the shepherd in the ballad as passive and resigned and, in the last analysis, longing to be extinguished in the bosom of Nature. But replacing the "pessimistic" stereotype by a formula thought to be "optimistic" because it reduces the "Mioritic nuptials" to a defense against the maleficent power of death does nothing to forward the exegesis of the "Mioritza."

PREHISTORY OF THE BALLAD

H. H. Stahl and Constantin Brailoiu were the first to see in the ballad, as in the ceremonies of posthumous betrothals, the desire of the living to pacify the dead man and especially to keep him from becoming "malicious." We will not discuss the extent to which the interpretation of death advanced by Brailoiu and many other folklorists does or does not represent genuine folk conceptions. We know that, for traditional societies, death is an experience almost outside the scope of modern thought. To give only one example, the indissoluble connection between the ideas of fertility, birth, and death—also indicated by the kinship, and sometimes the confusion, among their respective divinities—is very seldom comprehended in the modern world. Only great poets, or visionaries like Nietzsche, or a few chosen philosophers are capable of grasping the mysterious and paradoxical unity constituted by life and death. We may well ask, for example, if the importance Brailoiu attributes to the somber and terrifying aspects of the Romanian funerary rituals has its counterpart in reality. In the rural world, fear of ghosts does not seem to play the central role that Brailoiu gives it. More probably, in Romania as elsewhere in eastern Europe, fear of ghosts and vampires is rather the result of an occasional crisis, of a panic that quickly spreads to the entire collectivity

as the result of unusual calamities—epidemics, for example, or scourges of cosmic or historic proportions.

But even if we accept such an interpretation of death and funerary rituals as Brailoiu presented and other folklorists have approved, it remains to be demonstrated that there actually is any continuity between this world of ancestral darkness and terrors and the serene and transfigured universe of the "Mioritza." We need only reread Alecsandri's version of the ballad. Here, by "flowery peaks, thresholds of paradise," we enter a wholly different world, which not only has no connection with the world of funerary rituals and terrifying ghosts but does not even resemble the fields and villages of Romania as the "profane" eye sees them in the light of everyday experience. In the "Mioritza" the whole universe is transfigured. We are taken into a liturgical cosmos, in which Mysteries (in the religious sense of the term) are brought to fulfillment. The world proves to be "sacred," though at first sight its sacredness does not seem to be Christian in structure. As the preceding analyses have shown, specifically Christian concepts are not documented in the "Mioritza." Only the episode of the old mother seeking for her son is reminiscent of other folk treatments of the Virgin's wanderings in search of Jesus. But even in Romanian religious folklore the Christianity is not that of the Church. One of the characteristics of the peasant Christianity of the Romanians and of eastern Europe is the presence of many religious elements that are "pagan," archaic, sometimes scarcely Christianized. It is a new religious creation, peculiar to the southeast of Europe, which we have termed "cosmic Christianity" because, on the one hand, it projects the Christological mystery upon the whole of Nature and, on the other, neglects the historical elements of Christianity, only to dwell, instead, on the liturgical dimension of man's existence in the world.

This "cosmic Christianity" does not appear in the "Mioritza," as it does in so many other productions of Romanian religious folklore. But here as elsewhere, the cosmos is transfigured. Death is not regarded only as a marriage: it is a marriage whose structure and proportions are cosmic. The ballad reveals a mystical solidarity between man and Nature such as is no longer accessible to modern consciousness. It is not "pantheism," for the Cosmos

is not "sacred" in itself, by its own mode of being, but is sanctified by participating in the mystery of marriage. And it is also as a marriage that the Christian mystics and theologians have interpreted Christ's agony and death. We need only cite a text of Saint Augustine, in which Christ "like a bridegroom [. . .], came to the nuptial bed of the cross and, ascending it, consummated his marriage" (*Procedit Christus quasi sponsus de thalamo suo, praesagio nuptiarum exiit at campum saeculi, cucurrit sicut gigas exultando per viam usque venit ad crucis torum et ibi ascendendo coniugium . . .*).[49]

As for the acceptance of death, only from a rationalistic point of view can it be considered proof of "passivity" or resignation. In the universe of folk values the shepherd's attitude expresses a deeper existential decision: *man cannot defend himself against fate as he can against enemies;* he can only impose a new meaning on the ineluctable consequences of a destiny in course of fulfillment. There is no "fatalism" here, for a fatalist does not even believe that he can alter the meaning of what has been predestined for him.

The episode of the clairvoyant sheep admirably illuminates all this. In Alecsandri's version, as in a number of others, the sheep does not furnish "information" about the plot, it *oracularly reveals* "what has been decided." And it is another proof of the folk poet's creative genius that he chooses the oracular element instead of a "realistic" explanation (as, for example, in certain variants, in which the sheep arranges to be the last of the flock and discloses the plot. Then too, in the light of the value universe characteristic of folk creation, this "realistic" explanation seems to be recent; for the whole episode is dominated by the fabulous, and a sheep capable of speech does not need to play the spy in order to disclose the plot). Pastoral societies inherited from the ancient hunting cultures the belief that the actions and revelations of animals serve as oracles, for animals know the future. As everywhere in the archaic world, for the Mioritic shepherd too, destiny was revealed by a sheep. Whether he defends himself or not, whether he is victorious or not, is no longer important. Whatever the result of the struggle, the shepherd knows that, in the end, he must die.

49. Saint Augustine, Sermo suppositus 120, 8 (In Natali Domini, 4).

THE "TERROR OF HISTORY" AND THE SHEPHERD'S RESPONSE

To be sure, this decision to accept destiny does not express either the pessimistic conception of existence or the passivity and resignation that have been so often discussed since Alecsandri's day. The criticisms voiced by Caracostea, H. H. Stahl, and Brailoiu were justified. But it is useless to look for the "optimism" of the "Mioritza" in the shepherd's love for his work or in the defense of the living against ghosts. It was unjustifiable to talk of optimism in the case of a tragic revelation. The most profound message of the ballad lies in the shepherd's will to change the meaning of his destiny, to transmute his misfortune into a moment in the cosmic liturgy, by transfiguring his death into "mystical nuptials," by summoning the Sun and Moon to attend him, and projecting himself among the stars, the waters, and the mountains. To be sure, we have seen that this whole repertory of acts, images, and symbols already existed, at least virtually, in the rites and beliefs connected with posthumous betrothals. But the folk poet was able to transfigure these traditional stereotypes into the cosmically structured "Mioritic nuptials." In the ballad the meaning of the nuptials is no longer the substitution of ritual elements in order to symbolize the performance of a posthumous marriage; the fabulous majesty of the mystic betrothal is the shepherd's answer to his bloodstained destiny. *He succeeds in transmuting a dire event into a sacrament,* for the death of an unknown young shepherd is transformed into nuptial celebrations of cosmic proportions.

It is above all this episode whose meaning has been misunderstood. To estimate the consequences of such a will to transfigure a death sentence into "Mioritic nuptials," we need only compare it with certain typical reactions of modern societies. When he learns what Fate has decreed, the shepherd does not lament and does not yield to despair, nor does he try to abolish the meaning of the world and existence by "demystifying" it in an iconoclastic fury and proclaiming absolute nihilism as the only possible response to the revelation of the absurd. In other words, the shepherd does not behave in the manner of so many illustrious representatives of modern nihilism. His response is entirely different: he transmutes

the misfortune that sentences him to death into a majestic and spectacular sacramental mystery that, in the end, *enables him to triumph over his own fate.*

We repeat: this revalorization of the traditional theme by the poet of the ballad represents a new creation, which projects the pastoral drama into a wholly different spiritual horizon. The "Mioritic nuptials" are an original and vigorous solution to the incomprehensible brutality of a tragic destiny. The nearly total adherence of the folk and the intellectuals of Romania to the Mioritic drama proves, then, to be not unreasonable. Unconsciously, both the folk poets who sang and constantly improved the ballad and the intellectuals who learned it in school felt a secret affinity between the shepherd's destiny and the destiny of the Romanian people. The Mioritic hero succeeded in finding a meaning in his misfortune by assuming it, not as a personal "historic" event but as a sacramental mystery. *Hence he imposed a meaning on the absurd itself,* by responding to misfortune and death by a cosmic and spectacular marriage ceremony.

Even such has been the reaction of the Romanians and other peoples of eastern Europe to the invasions and historical catastrophes with which they have been visited. What I have elsewhere called "the terror of history" is precisely the awakening of consciousness to this fact: that, despite all that they are ready to accomplish, despite all sacrifices and all heroism, they are condemned by history, because they are situated at the very crossroads of invasions (the countless barbarian invasions from the end of antiquity to the central Middle Ages) or in the immediate neighborhood of military powers dynamized by imperialistic fanaticism. There is no effective military or political defense against the "terror of history," simply because of the crushing inequality between the invaders and the invaded peoples. To be sure, this does not mean that the latter did not defend themselves, militarily and politically, and often with success. But in the end the situation could not be changed. Small political groups of peasants could not long resist the masses of the invaders.

A similar situation is found in other parts of the world and in other historical periods: we need only remember the Hebrews and their neighbors in contact with the military empires. To de-

spair and nihilism the only response is a religious interpretation of the terror of history. We have elsewhere discussed the responses of certain antique peoples and of the Hebrews.[50] As for the rural peoples of eastern Europe, they succeeded in bearing disasters and persecution principally by virtue of the cosmic Christianity to which we referred above. The conception of a cosmos redeemed by the death and resurrection of the Savior, and sanctified by the footsteps of God, of Jesus, the Virgin, and the saints, made possible, if only sporadically and symbolically, the rediscovery of a world rich in the virtues and beauties of which the invasions and their terrors robbed the historical world. This is not the place to demonstrate that such a religious conception implies neither pessimism nor passivity. Rather, there is a reinterpretation of Christianity, in which historical events are assumed as moments inseparable from the Christological drama and finally transfigured.

Such a re-evaluation of Christianity represents a creation that has served as model, or guide, for a number of other folk creations. The essential element lies in *the capacity to annul the apparently irremediable consequences of a tragic event by charging them with previously unsuspected values.* It can never be repeated often enough that such a process, far from signifying a passive resignation, illustrates the very opposite, the unparalleled creative power of the folk genius. This cosmic Christianity is present in the ballad only allusively and in cipher—which is why a Dan Botta talked of the "Thracians" and "Dionysus." But the formula by which the shepherd transmutes his misfortune into "Mioritic nuptials" is of the same order as all those that have served to transform an adversity into its contrary.

To conclude: the principal finding of our analysis is the importance and continuity of the creative moments in the elaboration of the "Mioritza," from the pararitual rudiments of the *colinde* down to Alecsandri's ballad version. And the unprecedented success of the latter, both among intellectuals and the folk, once again confirms the extraordinary power of creativity. Indeed, Alecsandri's version has spread through the rural districts by the me-

50. Cf. *Le Mythe de l'Éternel Retour* (Paris, 1949; English translation by Willard R. Trask, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* [New York, 1954]).

dium of schoolbooks, and sometimes has completely replaced the local variants (cf. Fochi, p. 547). This fact is of the utmost significance, for it proves: (1) that the literary perfection of Alecsandri's version is not contradictory to the esthetic canon of the folk; (2) that the creative process, begun centuries ago, still operates in our day; (3) that the more recent interpretations and revalorizations of the ballad in modern Romanian culture are moments in the same direction of the creative process and in a sense continue it.

In the last analysis, if the "Mioritza" has a unique place on the two levels of Romanian culture—the plane of the folk and the plane of the educated—it is because both the folk and the intellectuals see in this masterpiece of the folk genius their mode of existence in the world and the most effective response they can make to destiny when, as so often in the past, it proves to be hostile and tragic. And this response each time constitutes a new spiritual creation.

Certainly we do not mean to say that the "Mioritza" synthesizes all the characteristics of the Romanian genius. But the "adherence" of a whole people to this folk masterpiece nevertheless remains significant, and it is impossible to conceive of an adequate history of Romanian culture which should fail to analyze and interpret that profound kinship.

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